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DEFEATING DAVID: LOOKING BEYOND A MATCHED STRATEGY

by

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December 2011

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DEFEATING DAVID: LOOKING BEYOND A MATCHED STRATEGY

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ABSTRACT

This thesis builds upon existing contemporary theories that attempt to explain the outcomes of asymmetric conflict. Specifically, this thesis uses Ivan Arreguín-Toft's Strategic Interaction Theory as a baseline to identify theoretical gaps that can not only help further explain asymmetric conflict outcomes, but also provide insight into developing the proper strategy for strong actors. Arreguín-Toft contends that when the strong actor employs the correct strategy then it will win over 75 percent of conflicts against a materially weaker adversary. This leads to a fundamental question: if the strong actor uses the correct strategy against a weaker opponent, then why do strong actors still lose nearly 25 percent of the time? In an effort to identify other key variables that help explain non-conventional war outcomes, this thesis evaluates case studies where the strong actor both won and lost an asymmetric conflict after choosing the correct strategy. This study finds two other factors that are important to achieving victory in an asymmetric conflict. First, the strong actor must have a viable indigenous political authority to work by, with and through. This concept has little to do with political legitimacy. Instead, it focuses on the capacity of the host nation, with strong actor assistance, to synchronize its military and political effort to defeat the insurgency. Second, the strong actor must not only use restraint in applying direct military power, but it must also use the correct force: a cadre that is trained in conducting irregular warfare. As such, this thesis' conclusions are aligned with the belief that it is the host nation's war to win or lose—adhering to this principle provides the strong actor with the best chance of “defeating David” before losing its political will.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|----------|---|
| AFP | Philippine Armed Forces |
| ALN | National Liberation Army |
| BATT | British Army Training Teams |
| BCT | Battalion Combat Teams |
| CAT | Civil Action Team |
| COIN | Counterinsurgency |
| CPP | Communist Party of the Philippines |
| CRUA | Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action |
| DA | Democratic Alliance |
| DLF | Dhofar Liberation Front |
| EOKA | Ethniki Organosis Kyprion Agoniston |
| FLN | <i>Front de Liberation Nationale</i> |
| GW | Guerrilla Warfare |
| IW | Irregular Warfare |
| JUSMAG | Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group |
| MCP | Malayan Communist Party |
| MTLD | Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties |
| PDRY | People's Democratic Republic of Yemen |
| PFLOAG | Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and Arabian Gulf |
| RAF | Royal Air Force |
| SAF | Sultan's Armed Forces |
| SAS | Special Air Service |
| SOAF | Sultan of Oman's Air Force |
| STRATINT | Strategic Interaction |
| UW | Unconventional Warfare |
| UDMA | Democratic Union for the Algerian Manifesto |
| UN | United Nations |

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I. INTRODUCTION

There is also a natural and very, very strong empathy with the underdog, with people who have suffered, people who have been pushed around by foreigners in particular, but also by their own people.

—Lakdhar Brahimi

Stories about underdogs like Jackie Robinson, the first black player in Major League Baseball, make us feel good, remind us that anything is possible, and inspire us to stand-up for what is right in the face of adversity. Who did not cheer for Rudy Ruettiger, the 165-pound local walk-on to make the Notre Dame Football team, and who can forget the “miracle on ice” in 1980 when the U.S. amateur hockey team defeated the Soviet Union en route to winning the Olympic Gold Medal? There are countless stories, both fiction and factual, where against all conceivable odds a hero, heroine, or group of dedicated individuals beats a significantly stronger opponent in the arena, on the court, or on the battlefield. Indeed, as he slung his rock at the enormous soldier named Goliath, David became the greatest underdog in the history of the world. In fact, the American affinity for an underdog story is rooted in its very existence. In the late 18th century, a compilation of state militias banded together to defeat a superior British Army to win their independence. However, the propensity to cheer for an underdog is not uniquely American. Throughout history, smaller and weaker powers have found ways to defeat a superior adversary despite seemingly insurmountable odds.

Typically, these stories tell of a great leader, sportsman, or warrior that led the weaker force to victory; however, in the reality of warfare, sometimes the weaker actor is not necessarily a “good guy.” Indeed, when thinking just about the post-War Two era, “underdog” victories include a litany of what can be described as criminal regimes such as Fidel Castro’s Cuba and the Taliban regime in Afghanistan shortly after Soviet withdrawal.

Regrettably, the other side of these coins often shows a superior force with a more egalitarian political philosophy that made key mistakes enabling the weaker side to win. This paper attempts to identify those key mistakes.

A. IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING ASYMMETRIC CONFLICTS

The military lethality and force projection capacity of the United States is unrivalled in the 21st century. Yet, a decade into the longest war in its history in Afghanistan; the United States, arguably the strongest power in both relative and real terms, is nowhere near a solution. In fact, the U.S. military efforts in both Iraq and Afghanistan are illustrative of a growing vulnerability of strong actors fighting non-conventional wars.¹ Simply stated, strong powers have been increasingly losing asymmetric conflicts over time. Figure 1 demonstrates this trend.

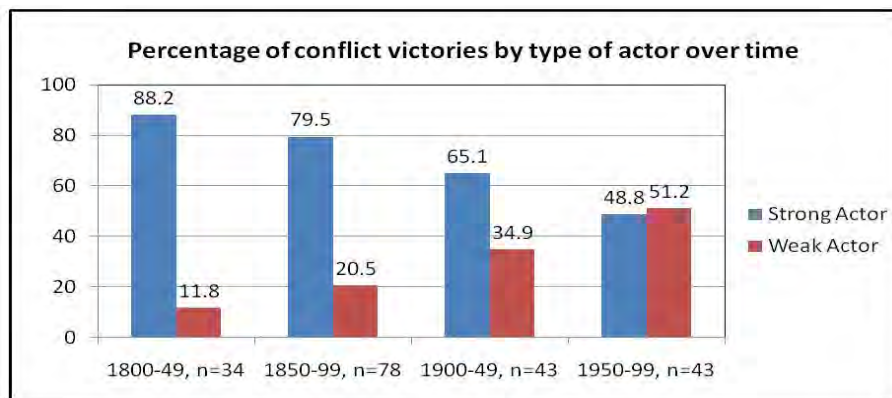


Figure 1. Percentage of Conflict Victories by Type of Actor
(From Arreguín-Toft, 2005) ²

However, this same weakness is not visible in direct or conventional conflicts where the strong actor benefits from a military material and force advantage.³ There are several insightful theories that attempt to explain why the weak can defeat the strong in an asymmetric conflict. These theories range from interest asymmetry among the principal actors, to regime type, to strategic interaction, and finally to external support for the weak actor. No one theory by itself answers the question(s) about why strong powers lose or how weak powers win. However, even collectively, these theories fall short of

¹ Ivan Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

² Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 4.

³ Ibid.

fully explaining the complex nature of asymmetric conflict and the implications for strong powers who find themselves increasingly pitted against a weaker opponent. What is apparent is that small actors appear to have identified this weakness and are exploiting it to their advantage. Given the United States' efforts in Afghanistan and Iraq this past decade, combined with the fact that insurgency has been the most prevalent form of conflict since 1949,⁴ few would argue against the prediction that the United States will continue to be engaged in small, asymmetric wars against militarily inferior adversaries for the foreseeable future. More importantly, one could perceive that because the United States has such an overwhelming military that it did not plan for, or was not prepared for, the strategy of its adversary.

B. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this paper then is to take a closer look at the major arguments regarding asymmetric conflict outcomes and attempt to evaluate why strong actors increasingly lose to weak actors. The goal is to identify any critical variables beyond the dominant contemporary theories that can enable strong powers to make sound decisions to defeat their weaker opponents. To be clear, the term asymmetric conflict refers to an asymmetry of relative levels of power between conflict actors, which is commonly related to an actor's military and economic capacity. As such the strong actor has a significant material advantage in both military and economic resources when compared to weak actor. In theory, relative power equals real power, or the capacity to produce an intended effect.⁵ However, it is evident that relative power does not always equal real power; and more importantly, real power does not always equal victory in an irregular war. Additionally, this paper specifically considers weak v. strong actors engaged in irregular warfare (as defined by the U.S. Department of Defense Joint Publication 1-02 Dictionary of Military Terms). Because terms are often conflated, it is important to distinguish the term *Irregular Warfare* (IW) from two of its sub-components:

⁴ Thomas X. Hammes, "Why Fight Small Wars?" *Small Wars Journal* 1 (April 2005): 1-5, accessed October 15, 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/documents/swjvol1.pdf>.

⁵ Kenneth Neal Waltz, *Man, the State, and War: A Theoretical Analysis* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1959), 205.

Unconventional Warfare (UW) and Counterinsurgency (COIN). These terms are defined below. Additionally, Figure 2 helps illustrate the relationship between IW, UW, and COIN.

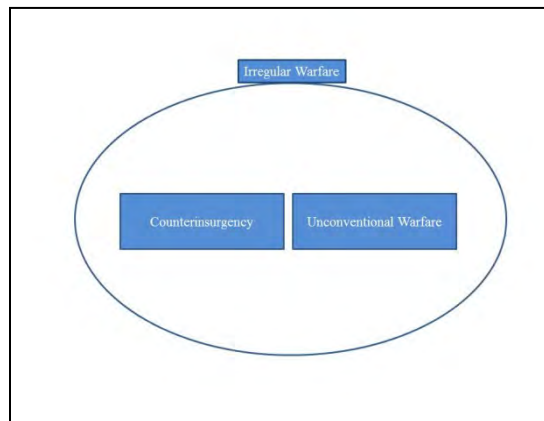


Figure 2. Authors' Depiction of Irregular Warfare

Irregular Warfare: A violent struggle among state and non-state actors for legitimacy and influence over the relevant population(s). Irregular warfare favors indirect and asymmetric approaches, though it may employ the full range of military and other capacities, in order to erode an adversary's power, influence, and will. Moreover, the following five activities exist under the heading of Irregular Warfare: Unconventional Warfare, Counterinsurgency, Foreign Internal Defense, Counter-Terrorism, and Stability Operations.⁶

Unconventional Warfare: Activities conducted to enable a resistance movement or insurgency to coerce, disrupt or overthrow a government or occupying power by operating through or with an underground, auxiliary and guerrilla force in a denied area.⁷

Counterinsurgency: Comprehensive civilian and military efforts taken to defeat an insurgency and to address any core grievances.⁸

Therefore, the primary difference between UW and COIN, under the overarching heading of IW, is perspective. When conducting UW, the actor (strong or weak) is attempting to overthrow an existing state power or occupying power. Put simply, UW

⁶ Joint Chiefs of Staff. *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Ft. Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2011), 180, accessed November 10, 2011, <https://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA485800>.

⁷ Ibid., 357.

⁸ Ibid., 82.

equals insurgency. Whereas, the term COIN specifically refers to a state or occupying power applying resources to quell an insurgency. In this reference, the insurgent force is always the weak actor; however, the insurgency may be supported by a strong actor through a form of UW.

Two other terms that are associated and often misused when defining asymmetric conflicts between strong and weak actors are Guerrilla Warfare and Insurgency.

Guerrilla Warfare (GW): Military and paramilitary operations conducted in enemy-held or hostile territory by irregular, predominantly indigenous forces.⁹ Not synonymous with unconventional warfare.

Insurgency: The organized use of subversion and violence by a group or movement that seeks to overthrow or force change of a governing authority. Insurgency can also refer to the group itself.¹⁰

This thesis will use the definitions outlined above to describe the nature of the small actor. Thus, in all cases, the small actor is an insurgent force that is employing a guerrilla warfare strategy to defeat an existing state power or occupying force. In any conflict, conventional or non-conventional, the focus of both military and political strategies should be on the adversary's center of gravity.¹¹ In an asymmetric conflict environment, this paper adheres to the approach that the population is the center of gravity.

C. THESIS PLAN

The game plan for the remainder of this paper is to briefly summarize the dominant contemporary theories that attempt to explain asymmetric conflict outcomes. Through review and analysis several potential theoretical gaps and/or weaknesses were identified that were then used to develop thesis research questions. The research questions, which are listed after the literature review, were then applied to case study

⁹ Joint Chiefs of Staff, *Department of Defense Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms*, 150.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 170.

¹¹ Kalev I. Sepp, *Best Practices in Counterinsurgency* (Ft Belvoir: Defense Technical Information Center, 2005), accessed November 10, 2011, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA485146>.

analysis using Arreguín-Toft's Strategic Interaction (STRATINT) argument as a framework. As such, this paper only included case studies on conflicts that are considered indirect v. indirect. Arreguín-Toft concluded that if the strong actor uses a matched strategy (direct v. direct or indirect v. indirect) then the strong actor wins over 75 percent of the time.¹² Yet when the strong actor does not use a matched strategy, the weak actor wins almost 65 percent of the time. Figure 3 illustrates the STRATINT theory.



Figure 3. STRATINT Theory Results (From Arreguín-Toft, 2005)¹³

The real question then is, when the strong actor does employ a matched strategy against a significantly weaker opponent: why do they still lose? The following case studies were analyzed in an effort to identify key variables from the conflicts that can be exported to other indirect v. indirect conflicts: French Algerian War, Dhofar Rebellion (Britain/Oman), and Huk Rebellion (U.S./Philippines). These case studies were chosen as models of both victory and defeat for democratic strong actors to help identify key variables that led to success or defeat of the weak actor. More importantly, the Dhofar Rebellion is understudied when compared to the British effort in Malaya, and the U.S. success in the Philippines is often overshadowed by its failure in Vietnam. The paper then summarizes the key findings from the case study analysis and offers implications for defense policy makers and planners. The goal is not to offer a new theoretical argument, but instead build upon the STRATINT theory and offer insight into defeating David.

¹² Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 45.

¹³ Ibid.

II. ASYMMETRIC CONFLICT THEORIES AND GAPS

Strategy without tactics is the slowest route to victory. Tactics without strategy is the noise before defeat.

—Sun Tzu

A. LITERATURE REVIEW

In his work on *Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict*, Andrew Mack contends that the primary reason the weak defeat the strong is simply because an interest asymmetry exists between the two principal actors.¹⁴ In general terms, the weak are fighting for their survival; whereas because the weak do not possess an invasion capability, then the strong actor's survival is not at stake.¹⁵ "It means, crudely speaking, that for the insurgents the war is 'total,' while for the external power it is necessarily 'limited.'"¹⁶ Moreover, the weak do not have to defeat the strong militarily to win; they simply need to not lose.¹⁷ Because the weak actor understands this dynamic, the structure of the conflict itself presents three significant challenges for the strong actor. First, the weak actor adopts an unconventional strategy and uses guerrilla warfare and terrorist tactics for the sole purpose of creating a protracted, psychologically exhausting war. To do anything else, such as directly confront the military capability of the strong actor would be suicide.¹⁸ Second, it turns a would-be military conflict into a political war, and from day one the strong actor is fighting on borrowed time. The strong actor has such an overwhelming force and resource advantage that it enters into the conflict with the expectation of quick and decisive victory.¹⁹ However, if victory is not achieved quickly, then political vulnerability begins. Third, when the war is seen as

¹⁴ Andrew Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars: The Politics of Asymmetric Conflict," *World Politics: A Quarterly Journal of International Relations* 27 (1975): 175–200.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid., 181.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

limited because the opponent is comparatively weak, then the prosecution of the war does not take priority over other competing political goals.²⁰

Mack points out that in any conflict there must be a political capability to wage war. Initially, because there is no existential threat to the strong actor, it will not fully mobilize its forces to fight a limited war.²¹ Moreover, as the war becomes protracted because of the tactics used by the weak actor, the cost of the war increases politically. “[A] war with no visible payoff against an opponent who poses no direct threat will come under increasing criticism as battle-casualties rise and economic costs escalate.”²² Eventually, the strong actor will become war weary, and there will be enough domestic opposition to end the conflict. It is not a matter of resources, because clearly if survivability were on-the-line, then the strong actor would mobilize whatever it takes to win. In essence, relative power by the strong actor creates interest asymmetry in a limited war and exposes the strong actor to political vulnerability, which explains why strong actors lose.

Mack’s argument is based on sound logic and is the starting point for subsequent theories on asymmetric conflict. One weakness is Mack’s contention that interest asymmetry by itself is sufficient to fully explain asymmetric conflict outcomes. For example, interest asymmetry does not explain the increasing trend of weak actor victories over time.²³ In addition, it does not explain strong actor quick and decisive victories in asymmetric conflicts when the weak actor fights non-conventionally with the purpose of creating a protracted war.²⁴ Moreover, Mack’s theory does not address the domestic and popular conditions in the state where the war is fought. In exploring the U.S. involvement in Vietnam, he rightfully points that the war extended beyond the battlefield back to the social and political institutions of the United States.²⁵ However, interest asymmetry did

²⁰ Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars,” 184.

²¹ Ibid.

²² Ibid., 185.

²³ Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 14.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Mack, “Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars,” 177–179.

not take into account the domestic social and political environment in Vietnam. Factors such as popular support for the insurgency and lack of popular support for the U.S. backed South Vietnam government go a long way in explaining U.S. failure in Vietnam. In summary, interest asymmetry does a great job in identifying the political vulnerability of strong actors fighting limited wars, but falls short in fully explaining asymmetric conflict outcomes. More importantly, although political vulnerability is relatively easy to understand regarding the strong actor; the question remains, what can be done to reduce this vulnerability? Is it simply a structural condition of asymmetric conflicts that the strong actor can never mitigate? Or, could a different approach or even a different type of force be used to reduce this risk?

Building on Mack's theory of interest asymmetry, Gil Merom adds in regime type as a variable, and contends that modern democracies have limited domestic political tolerance for protracted, indecisive wars.²⁶ In essence, democracies fail in small wars because they are unable to escalate the level of violence and brutality necessary to win. Democratic societies do not understand the nature of small wars and have little tolerance for a long war that produces either high friendly casualties, extreme oppression of the insurgent indigenous population, or both.²⁷ The dilemma democracies face in fighting small wars is identified by Merom as structural within its society, and he classifies the challenges as instrumental dependence, normative difference, and political relevance.²⁸ As defined by Merom:

Instrumental dependence refers to the state's degree of reliance on society to provide the resources, mostly manpower, needed to execute national policies. Normative difference refers to the distance between the position of the state and that of the liberal forces (that give meaning to the term society) concerning the legitimacy of the demand for sacrifice and brutal conduct. Political relevance refers to the inherent degree of influence societal forces have over policy-choices or their outcomes.²⁹

²⁶ Gil Merom, *How Democracies Lose Small Wars: State, Society, and the Failures of France in Algeria, Israel in Lebanon, and the United States in Vietnam* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid., 18.

To be clear, the latter two (normative difference and political relevance) are unique to democracies. Therefore, democracies fail in small (asymmetric) wars because of the difference between the state and its society over what is necessary to win a protracted, violent conflict in a distant land.³⁰ In order to secure victory, democratic societies must be willing to endure high friendly casualties and enable its military to maximize violence against a much weaker enemy. According to Merom, democracies simply do not have the stomach for it.

Merom's argument is intuitively logical. Democratic societies are more open by comparison to authoritarian states. It follows that people within democratic societies to a degree have to be on board with the policies established by its elected government as a mere matter of representation. When a divide exists over the protracted nature of an asymmetric war, the strong state has little recourse other than to yield to the citizenry who have in essence ceded their authority to the elected state officials. Merom's theory clearly expands Mack's theory of interest asymmetry. However, Merom's argument explaining asymmetric conflict outcomes is insufficient in several areas. The first deficiency is (interestingly) addressed by Mack twenty years before Merom's published work. Citing the Portuguese experience in Africa, Mack contends internal divisions over policy exist in any state independent of regime type and has limited causality in explaining conflict outcome.³¹ The second weakness to Merom's argument is logically it would follow that authoritarian states should have a better record than democratic states in fighting small wars; however, they do not.³² Moreover, Merom's argument does not account for or explain instances where the democratic state used brutal tactics against a weak actor, such as the U.S. Phoenix program in Vietnam, and still lost.³³ Regardless, Merom's contribution is significant because it specifically addresses the domestic structure of the strong power in its ability to successfully wage a limited war. More importantly, in today's international system strong states, typically western democracies,

³⁰ Mack, "Why Big Nations Lose Small Wars," 179.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 16.

³³ Ibid.

have a responsibility to “get involved” even when their vital interests are not at stake. Once again the question needs to be asked is it simply a structural condition of asymmetric conflicts that the strong actor can never mitigate? Or, could a different approach or even a different type of force be used to reduce this risk? Clearly, understanding the indigenous societal and governance structure as well as what it takes to win a small war will assist strong actor policy makers in developing the appropriate political and military strategy to be successful.

As previously discussed, no one theory by itself answers the question(s) concerning why strong actors lose to weak actors in asymmetric conflict. However, to date, Ivan Arreguín-Toft’s Strategic Interaction (STRATINT) theory is the most complete. In his 2005 book, *How the Weak Win Wars: A Theory of Asymmetric Conflict*, Arreguín-Toft successfully demonstrated that if the strong actor employs the correct strategy then it will win over 75 percent of the time against a materially weaker adversary.³⁴ Whereas, if the strong actor chooses the wrong strategy, then its weaker opponent will win over 60 percent of the conflict engagements.³⁵ Arreguín-Toft breaks down the STRATINT possibilities into four scenarios with each actor controlling what strategy it employs. In simple terms, the strong actor can either employ a direct or indirect offensive strategy, and the weak actor can choose either a direct or indirect defensive strategy. He further defines direct versus indirect for each actor based on the following typology. In a direct-direct engagement, strong actors use a conventional attack and the weak actor uses a conventional defense. In an indirect-indirect engagement, the strong actor uses a strategy of barbarism and the weak actor employs a guerrilla warfare strategy. Figure 4. is a matrix outlining conflict outcome based on the STRATINT theory.³⁶

³⁴ Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 45.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Ibid.

| Weak Actor Strategic Approach | | | |
|---------------------------------|----------|--------------|--------------|
| Strong Actor Strategic Approach | | Direct | Indirect |
| | Direct | Strong Actor | Weak Actor |
| | Indirect | Weak Actor | Strong Actor |

Figure 4. STRATINT Theory Matrix (From Arreguín-Toft, 2005)³⁷

On the surface, Arreguín-Toft's theory is also intuitively logical: the key to victory is choosing the right strategy. However, even as sound as his argument is, several gaps exist in his theory concerning indirect conflicts that merit additional research and consideration. First, Arreguín-Toft contends that in conflicts where the strong actor chooses the correct strategy, then it will end quickly.³⁸ While this assumption often holds true in a direct v. direct engagement, it fails to address the inherent protracted nature of indirect conflict. Second, Arreguín-Toft's labeling of "Barbarism" and "Guerrilla Warfare" as respective strategies for strong and weak powers in an indirect v. indirect conflict is problematic.³⁹ These terms over simplify the strategies used by each actor and focuses on the ability (or inability) of the strong actor to defeat its enemy militarily with little regard for the other (social, economic, political) aspects of irregular warfare. Third, Arreguín-Toft devotes little attention to analyzing the resources employed by the strong actor, and whether or not the strong actor is trained or has experience fighting an irregular war. Clearly, the strong actor is materially superior; however, are there other competing interests that preclude the strong actor from bringing the full weight of its strength to the conflict? More importantly, just because a strong actor chooses the correct strategy as defined by Arreguín-Toft, does not mean its military is adept at implementing the associated tactics. Finally, Arreguín-Toft fails to distinguish the specific nature of a given conflict particularly when defining the indirect approach

³⁷ Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 39.

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ Ibid.

used by both actors. For example, what is the nature of the insurgency and its associated grievances? Is it a nationalist movement? Is it motivated by religion? Is there a minority in power? Moreover, there are clearly more tactics available to strong actors than just barbarism. Did the strong actor primarily attempt to kill/capture the insurgents? Did the strong actor attempt to isolate the population from the insurgents with re-location programs? What type of force did the strong actor use? Ignoring these additional considerations fundamentally reduces the STRATINT theory to the military aspect of asymmetric conflict. In short, considering the exact nature of given conflict, as well as clearly defining the political environment, are not only critical to determining the appropriate counter-strategy, but also in determining conflict outcome.

One final argument describing asymmetric conflict outcomes that warrants its own category of attention is Jeffrey Record's contention that there are no modern examples of successful major insurgent wars unassisted by foreign help.⁴⁰ Moreover, external help to the weaker side can reduce, even eliminate, material disparity between strong and weak actors. In his book, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win*, Record examines eleven insurgent wars from 1775 to the present and concludes that external assistance is a stronger explanation for insurgent success than any other theory. He does not discredit the importance of the three competing theories outlined above: interest asymmetry (Mack), strategic interaction (Arreguín-Toft), and strong actor regime type (Merom). Moreover, Record acknowledges that foreign help is a significant enabler, but does not suggest that it guarantees success for weak actors. "It is, of course, impossible in any of these [insurgent] cases to determine with certitude whether external assistance was decisive or even whether it contributed more to the weaker side's victory than superior insurgent will and strategy. To argue that an insurgency could not have won without foreign help is not to claim that external assistance was the decisive factor."⁴¹ However, Record contends that weak actor victories almost always depend on some combination of strong political will (survival), proper strategy, and external assistance.⁴²

⁴⁰ Jeffrey Record, *Beating Goliath: Why Insurgencies Win* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 2007).

⁴¹ Ibid., 57.

⁴² Ibid.

Record's contribution is important because he highlights a variable that was not emphasized by the other leading asymmetric conflict theories. However, just as Record is critical of the other theories for spending little attention on the value of external assistance, it is also essential not to over emphasize its importance. Indeed there is a need to consider external assistance as a variable in analyzing asymmetric conflict outcomes, particularly as it enables the weak actor to protract the conflict exposing the political vulnerability of the strong actor. In addition, external assistance can help close the gap in relative (and real) power by providing advanced military equipment to the weak actor.⁴³ The clearest example for the importance of this argument is the U.S. decision to provide Stinger missiles to the Mujahadin to combat the Soviet assault helicopters in the 1979–89 Afghan war. More important than external assistance; however, is indigenous or popular assistance. Yes, the weak actor must obtain assistance (people, guns, and money) in order to survive, but these logistical sources at the basic (survival) level primarily exist within the population. The weak actor's ability (or inability) to hide among the people is far more critical to its survival than receiving foreign assistance.⁴⁴ More importantly, what strategy (military, economic, political) should the strong actor use to mitigate both internal and to a lesser extent, external assistance? Like the previous theories, by adding the variable of external assistance, even in conjunction with the other three theories, still does not answer the fundamental question about why weak actors are able to overcome its stronger opponent.

B. THESIS RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The value in summarizing and evaluating the major theories on asymmetric conflict outcomes is that it helps to identify any areas not adequately addressed by the existing literature. Several areas that require additional consideration are missing. First, in all four theories outlined above, not one considers in detail the exact nature of the weak actor and the type of insurgency it is fighting. This analysis needs to go beyond the type of military strategy (indirect) and tactics (guerrilla warfare/terrorism) used, and

⁴³ Arreguín-Toft, *How the Weak Win Wars*, 193.

⁴⁴ Gordon H. McCormick, "Mystic Diamond" (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA, 12 August 2010).

instead needs to focus specifically on the nature of insurgency and its grievances with the existing governance structure. How can a strong actor develop a proper counter-strategy if it does not understand the nature of its opponent, and not only what it has to work against, but also what it has to work with? While all four theories appear to address it, not one accounts for popular support of the weak actor as the deciding factor in the conflict outcome. When in fact the ability (or inability) of the strong actor to isolate the weak actor from the population and deliver the essential services such as security, healthcare, education, and infrastructure may be the most important factor in determining the conflict outcome. Second, what type of force did the strong actor use? Was it a force trained in irregular warfare with experience in conducting counterinsurgency? Did the strong actor use indigenous forces to supplement its effort? This question specifically addresses if the strong actor used the right tool (force) for the job. Finally, were there any domestic or international constraints levied on the strong actor? Were there domestic economic issues, or another conflict, that precluded the strong actor from using its full capacity? Was there international pressure (or norms) that precluded the strong actor from implementing its military and political agenda? In sum, the only way for the strong actor to develop the appropriate strategy is to not only fully understand the nature of its enemy, but to also understand the operating environment—both at home and abroad. Failure to account for these factors will likely mean a decreased winning percentage for strong actors engaged in an irregular war against a significantly weaker adversary.

Based on the potential theoretical gaps identified in the contemporary literature, the following four questions were developed for each case study:

1. Was the strong actor an internal or external counterinsurgent force?
2. Did the strong actor have any COIN experience?
3. How was the strong actor constrained?
4. Did the strong actor deploy a force skilled in irregular warfare?

Each case study chapter will have the same structure. It will begin by covering the background of each conflict and then cover the nature of the insurgency and the indirect strategy used by the insurgent force. Finally, it will evaluate the

counterinsurgent force through the lens of the research questions posed above to see if any of these factors are important in determining asymmetric conflict outcomes beyond an insurgent/counterinsurgent matched strategy.

III. CASE STUDY: FRENCH-ALGERIAN WAR (1954–1962)

It is inconceivable that Algeria should secede from Metropolitan France. This should be clear forever to all, in Algeria, in Metropolitan France, and abroad. France will never, no Parliament, no Government will ever, yield on this basic principle. Algeria is France, and not a foreign country under our protection.

—M. Mendes-France, November 1, 1954

A. BACKGROUND

The French conquest of Algeria began in 1830 when King Charles X gave the order to invade in an attempt to save his weak regime.⁴⁵ However, even after more than 120 years of French presence, France failed to fully integrate the indigenous Algerian population resulting in the start of a nationalist bloody rebellion on November 1, 1954. Soon after France's initial invasion, French citizens along with other Europeans from along the Mediterranean often referred to as either *colons*, or *pied-noirs*, began to settle in Algeria for both adventurous and economic reasons.⁴⁶ In 1834, French King Louis Philippe, Charles X's successor, annexed Algeria and issued a subsequent decree to conquer all of its territory in 1840.⁴⁷ More importantly, French citizenship was not extended to the local Arabs and Berbers of Algeria, and instead they were subjected to special French police and military laws.⁴⁸ As a result, complete subjugation of Algeria did not take place until 1857 because of the skillful Algerian resistance led by Abd el-Kader.⁴⁹ Opposition by Algeria's population not only stemmed from the brutal treatment carried out by French authorities, but it was also due to the Algerian attachment to land and to Islam. French colonization not only completely devastated the basic structure of

⁴⁵ Joan Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution* (New York: Praeger, 1961), 6.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ American University Special Operations Research Office and Paul A. Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*. (Washington, DC: American University, 1962).

⁴⁹ Ibid., 247.

Algerian society, but by the beginning of the 20th century, the *colons* had also acquired all of Algeria's most fertile agricultural lands.⁵⁰

France established the office of Governor-General in Algeria 1871; however, nearly all the responsibility for governing Algeria remained in metropolitan France until 1896 when the Governor-General assumed primary administration responsibility for Algeria.⁵¹ Prior to 1871, France did attempt to make some concessions to the Algerian population. In 1865, France made local Algerians French subjects and granted them access to minor civil administrative functions as well as permission to enter the French Army. However, in order to obtain French citizenship, an Algerian would have to abandon his status under Muslim civil laws.⁵² Although major political and economic inequities between French citizens and French subjects always existed, the real problems emerged after World War I when French-educated Muslims and former Muslim soldiers of the French Army began to demand equality. Prior to the inter-war period, any movement by the local population to increase their voice in national affairs was quelled by the *colons*. As such, disparities between French citizens and subjects became the focal issue for the various nationalist movements in Algeria.⁵³

In addition to the Algerian Communist Party, three major nationalist movements within the Muslim community emerged during the inter-war period to address the colonial inequalities.⁵⁴ First, was the MTLD (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties), which is the organization most closely associated with the 1954 revolution.⁵⁵ Led by Messali Ahmed ben Hadj, the MTLD advocated complete independence from

⁵⁰ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 218.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 22.

⁵³ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 247–250.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1972), 22–23.

France and sought both Islamic economic and social reforms.⁵⁶ Second, there was the UDMA (Democratic Union for the Algerian Manifesto), led by Fehrat Abbas and Dr. Ben Djelloul, which was mainly comprised of French-educated intellectuals. The UDMA goals were total assimilation into France and political equality within Algeria.⁵⁷ Third, was the Association of the Ulemas. Led by Ben Badis, the Ulemas were primarily a religious organization that was comprised of Orthodox Muslims offended by French control of their religion. Like the MTLA, they wanted independence from France, they opposed French culture, and wanted to make Arabic the official language of Algeria.⁵⁸

Under the Vichy Regime after the fall of France in 1940, the situation became worse for the Muslims. The *colons* actually pushed for self-determination and agrarian reforms in an effort to gain full Muslim support during WWII. However, on May 8, 1945 “Liberation Day,” the *colons* reacted swiftly to nationalist pressure for reforms, and carried out a brutal repression to quell a Muslim uprising.⁵⁹ The uprising in 1945 did include indiscriminate killing of Europeans by Muslim mobs. However, the French repression that followed was even more brutal. Several thousand Muslims were killed or executed, and another 4,500 were arrested, and 151 sentenced to death.⁶⁰

The Statute of 1947 was the last hope of political reform before the 1954 revolution when the French National Assembly created the Algerian Assembly, which along with the Governor-General, were supposed to govern Algeria.⁶¹ The assembly was comprised of 120 seats split into two colleges. The first college contained elected *colons* along with certain educated Muslims, and the second college of the remaining Muslims.⁶² While French law concerning Algeria was complex, the Algerian Assembly was the first institution that gave Algerians sizeable representation; however, the

⁵⁶ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 244.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 25.

⁶¹ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 26.

⁶² Ibid., 26.

inequities between the two populations remained stark.⁶³ In essence, one European vote equaled nine Muslim votes and enabled the *colons* to dominate the legislative process through effective veto.⁶⁴ “If the Statute of 1947 proclaimed the Algerian equal to the European *colon*, it did not make him so either in fact or in law.”⁶⁵

Following the Chinese communist model for revolution, the Algerian nationalists realized it must first develop a strong unified revolutionary party. Up until the spring of 1954, the disparate nationalist organizations had failed to gain any political ground or achieve a common party program. Therefore, in July 1954, nine members of the paramilitary arm of the MTLN created the CRUA (Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action) in Cairo, Egypt with the full support of Egyptian President Nasser.⁶⁶ Since all political attempts for reform had failed up to this point, the group decided that the only solution was direct action.⁶⁷ The CRUA met in October 1954 and set November 1 as the date to launch the Algerian revolution. On the morning of 1 November after the first wave of attacks, the CRUA adopted a new name: FLN (*Front de Liberation Nationale*).⁶⁸

B. INSURGENT FORCE—INDIRECT STRATEGY

The Algerian nationalism that spawned the 1954 revolution combined Islamic and pan-Arab ideologies with the communist revolutionary concepts and native egalitarianism.⁶⁹ “The main political goal of the revolution itself was national independence and the ‘restoration of the sovereign, democratic and social Algerian state

⁶³ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 26.

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 27.

⁶⁶ David Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956-1958*, (Santa Monica: Rand Corp, 2006), 15.

⁶⁷ Ibid.

⁶⁸ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 252.

⁶⁹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 3.

within the framework of Islamic principles.’’⁷⁰ The FLN leaders almost exclusively came from the lower-middle and lower class of Algerian society, and they modeled themselves after the Chinese theory of revolution—revolution based on the masses.⁷¹ The FLN generation had served in the French army during WWII. “Having contributed a great deal to the defeat of the Nazis and to the liberation of France, Algerian soldiers expected to be granted Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. Instead, they got the Setif repression of 1945, a rude reminder of the horrible reality: inequality would always remain.”⁷² Like the Chinese revolutionary model, they wanted land redistribution, state direction, and nationalization of public utilities. They became convinced that direct action was the only way to achieve independence. Having succeeded in establishing a unified party with the formation of the CRUA/FLN, the next step in the Chinese revolutionary theory was to obtain popular support.⁷³

In October 1954, the CRUA created the National Liberation Army (ALN) to execute their direct action strategy against the French administration and to exert pressure and influence over the population.⁷⁴ Additionally, to execute command and control of nationalist forces, the CRUA divided Algeria into six *wilayas* (provinces) depicted in Figure 5:

⁷⁰ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 253.

⁷¹ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 14.

⁷² Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 57.

⁷³ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 14.

⁷⁴ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 65.

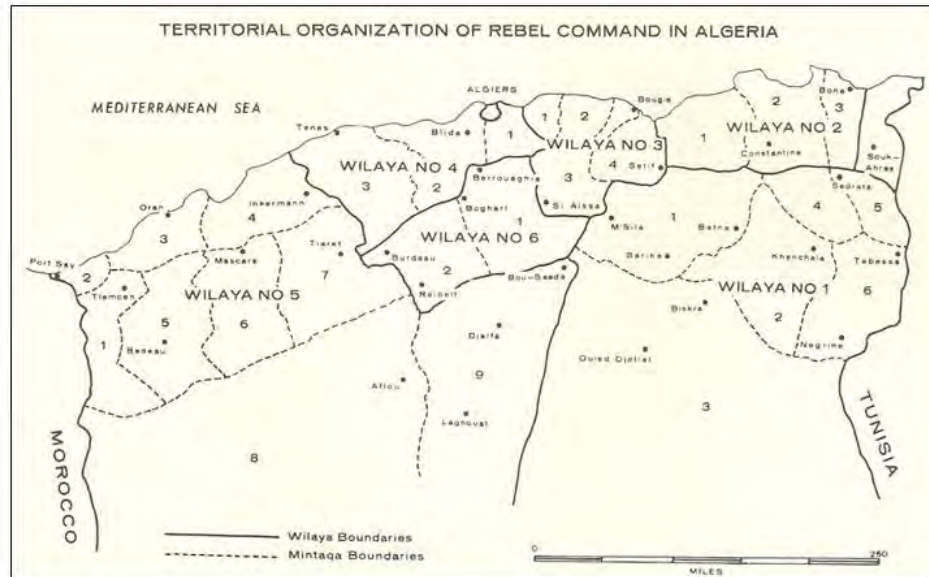


Figure 5. Six Provinces used by Algerian Nationalists (From Heggoy, 1972) ⁷⁵

The *wilayas* were then subdivided into *mintakas* (zones) commanded by a Major or Captain, *nahias* (sectors) led by a Lieutenant, and finally *kasmas* (districts) led by a senior NCO.⁷⁶ Initially, the ALN was not developed beyond large and small bands of rebel forces loosely organized and ill-equipped to challenge the French forces conventionally.⁷⁷ Between 1954–56 the nationalists tried to conventionally organize the ALN to fight the French for territory. However, repeated failures forced the rebels to adopt a different policy. By the end of 1956, the ALN units began to split into even smaller factions as the nationalists realized they could not defeat the French militarily.⁷⁸ Table 1 shows a 1956 estimate of ALN strength:

⁷⁵ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 63.

⁷⁶ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 19.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 173.

| Areas of Operation | Regulars | Auxiliaries | Total |
|---|--------------|---------------|---------------|
| Oran | 1,250 | 3,000 | 4,250 |
| Kabylia and Mitidja Plain around Algiers | 2,000 | 6,000 | 8,000 |
| North Constantine | 1,700 | 5,000 | 6,700 |
| East Constantine | 1,300 | 4,000 | 5,300 |
| South Constantine | 1,800 | 3,000 | 4,800 |
| TOTALS: | 8,050 | 21,000 | 29,050 |

Table 1. Force Estimates for Algerian National Army (From Galula, 2006)⁷⁹

According to David Galula, who served as a company commander in the Kablyia region from 1956 to 1958, the initial rebel strategy consisted of a preliminary period of “blind” terrorism, followed by selective terrorism, and then village consolidation. Blind terrorism was designed to not only attract attention to their cause, but to also spread the feeling of insecurity throughout Algeria.⁸⁰ Selective terrorism, which specifically targeted French officials, followed and lasted throughout the war as the primary means to control the population.⁸¹ To this end, the rebels targeted Muslims working in the French Administration or anyone suspected of being pro-France.⁸² Additionally, they began to raise the political conscious of the masses, and forcibly involve the Muslim population in the revolution. Rebel leaders would quickly enlist young men, and force them to participate in a violent act against the French. Once the recruit became an outlaw and implicated his entire family, he was then forced to remain part of the rebellion. “The Algerian nationalists understood the ways of the traditional society within which they operated; they comprehended the depth of family ties and of other group allegiances; and

⁷⁹ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 19.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 15.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

they exploited this knowledge.”⁸³ Moreover, the guerrillas saw no need to persuade a majority of the masses; in any community all the ALN needed was active support of around 20 percent of the population. The remainder could be controlled.⁸⁴ Given the widespread dissatisfaction with the French, 20 percent was easily won over. The rebels only needed to eliminate a small minority of French supporters. Using these techniques, support for the nationalists rose steadily during the onset of the revolution.⁸⁵ The ALN followed success in each locality by establishing of a Political Administrative cell to perform tasks that were not military related such as collect taxes and administer justice.⁸⁶ They facilitated ALN protection in the village. Moreover, it was the presence of these cells among the population that prevented the locals from providing intelligence to the French authority.⁸⁷ However, “[t]he insurgency did not spread at once all over Algeria; it did so slowly, area by area, very often jumping over territory in between as if insurgent cadres had been injected from the outside.”⁸⁸

Therefore, the strategic objective of the FLN was to keep the revolution alive, and develop it from rebellion to full-scale civil war.⁸⁹ In reality, the November 1, 1954, uprising launched by a small number of ill-equipped and isolated Algerians yielded little to the FLN. However, it led to a decisive turn in Franco-Algerian relations by rekindling the Algerian nationalist movement. Since the Algerian nationalists were not equipped to confront the French forces directly, the tactic was to fall back into the inaccessible rural areas, where the French influence was virtually non-existent, engage in guerrilla warfare to give demonstrations of its continued existence, and recruit the local population.⁹⁰ The ALN planted a few rebels in remote villages to win over the population for people, guns,

⁸³ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 96.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 100.

⁸⁵ Ibid.

⁸⁶ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 20.

⁸⁷ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 102.

⁸⁸ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 18.

⁸⁹ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 254.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

and money as well as hiding places. From these initial spots, they would penetrate in widening circles to neighboring areas, eventually reaching the settled areas of French control.

ALN operations resembled an oil spot on a blotter.⁹¹ ALN strategy revolved around seizing control of a remote village where French presence was light. It was not difficult to persuade a village who may have never seen a European official, in some cases, the ALN simply filled a power vacuum.⁹² From there, French control would be broken by guerrilla and terrorist action, or as a result of severe French repression, which often followed the attacks. In urban centers, terrorism alone was used. Outside urban centers “hit and run” tactics were used to avoid direct combat with the superior French forces.⁹³ “In every operation, the Algerians enjoy a basic advantage: their seemingly omnipresent civilian auxiliary, who serve as ‘human radar,’ scouts, intelligence agents, and guides.”⁹⁴ ALN guerrilla units acted on the population through persuasion and the use of terror. The ALN would target French-run villages by assassinating French appointed officials forcing the population to support the ALN. Once compromised, the villages had no choice but to support the ALN. However, the ALN also integrated themselves with the local population, by providing them with an effective administration, rule-of-law to settle feuds, protection from raids, and often establishing schools and medical facilities.⁹⁵

The use of terrorism by ALN primarily involved intimidation, assassination, and indiscriminate bombing.⁹⁶ French-Muslims and rival nationalist leaders were first warned by letters to stop cooperating with French authorities. Those who did not were assassinated, and a letter with the ALN crest was pinned to the victim. This technique

⁹¹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 95.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 255.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 255.

⁹⁵ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 256.

⁹⁶ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 99.

silenced any local opposition to the FLN, disrupted the French effort to gain local support, and raised the prestige of the FLN as an effective organization. Indiscriminate bombing primarily targeted the European population creating a tense atmosphere of suspicion and widened the divide among the two communities. It also brought about violent measures of French repression that further antagonized the Muslim community. Additionally, it forced the French to station more troops in the urban centers to enforce martial law/curfews relieving some of the pressure on ALN forces in the rural communities.⁹⁷

The nationalists preferred to use terrorism because it was cheaper in both manpower and materials. Additionally, instead of searching for enemy companies, the French had to deal with multiple fragmented units that could attack at will and then disappear. In the early stages of the war, the French sought to seek out and destroy the FLN-ALN; however, the French success only forced the nationalists to divide into smaller units. “Because the different methods used by the French and the rebels to gain control over the masses, the disproportionate military advantage of the French was not decisive.”⁹⁸ Each side realized that victory could not be achieved without controlling the population. “Failure to obey rebel directives often brought mutilation or execution of uncooperative Algerians; on the other hand, when Arabs and Berbers who engaged in nationalistic, but non-military activities were captured by the French, they customarily only received only a short prison term.”⁹⁹ The choice was easy, and it is easy to understand why locals were reluctant to support the French when a small pocket of the ALN remained in a region. The French Army had to adapt to what scholars in France referred to as revolutionary warfare.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁷ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 256.

⁹⁸ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 174.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 174.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 175.

C. COIN FORCE–INDIRECT STRATEGY

1. Variable 1: Was the Strong Actor an External or Internal Counterinsurgent Force?

While there is no single reason for the outbreak of the 1954 revolution, it is hard to look past the disparate ethnic, political, and economic gap between the French and the Algerians that existed for over 120 years as the root cause.¹⁰¹ What makes the French case unique is France considered itself the legitimate government of Algeria. As such, France's suppression of the revolution was considered a legitimate use of force by a sovereign state on its domestic populace. However, although France believed Algeria was a part of France, the French were a gross minority and were colonizers in every sense. The French adopted an Algerian policy that consisted of repression tempered with reform.¹⁰² Algeria would remain a part of France, and the French plan was to eliminate the insurgent threat while implementing the reforms of the 1947 statute. However, Algerian Muslims were discriminated in all facets of life—politically, economically, and socially. Berber and Arab pride suffered constant insults in their daily lives. For example, Algerians were excluded from certain beaches that were designated only for Europeans.¹⁰³ To make matters worse, the French discrimination was backed by the power of the French army. Many Algerians saw autonomy as the only solution, and autonomy and independence were only a step apart.¹⁰⁴

The 1954 census of Algeria listed a total population of over 9.5 million, of which only a little over 1 million were European, leaving approximately 8.5 million Muslims of both Arab and Berber descent.¹⁰⁵ Of the Europeans, roughly 450 thousand were French, 325 thousand Spanish, and 100 thousand of Italian ancestry. Around 150 thousand were Jews of North African, Spanish and Italian origin, as well as another 50 thousand of

¹⁰¹ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 6.

¹⁰² Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 81.

¹⁰³ *Ibid.*, 131.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 133.

¹⁰⁵ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 238.

Maltese origin.¹⁰⁶ By 1954, 89 percent of the Europeans who lived there had been born in Algeria.¹⁰⁷ As such, they, the *colons*, considered Algeria theirs. Moreover, French is the predominant language of the Europeans, even though a small percentage did speak Arabic and Berber as a second language. Naturally, Arabic was the predominant language of the Muslims; however, most of the Muslim city dwellers achieved varying degrees of fluency in French.¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that nearly 90 percent of the population was indigenous, there was a tremendous political inequality. The 1947 Statute, which was supposed to give Muslims some measure of self-determination, was never fully realized. The passage of the statute was an attempt to address the situation; however, the creation of two unequal electoral colleges, one elected by the Europeans, and one elected by the natives only exacerbated the inequities. As previously mentioned, the Paris appointed Governor-General had veto power over any legislation deemed detrimental to French interests. Moreover, the powers of the Algerian assembly were limited as it was excluded from deliberating “all laws guaranteeing constitutional liberties, all laws of property, marriage, and personal status..., applying to military and civilian departments or posts”¹⁰⁹

Coupled with the political inequities, the Algerian masses were poor. Nearly 60 percent were classified as indigent.¹¹⁰ “[T]he vast majority of Algerian Muslims had an average annual income of only about \$45.”¹¹¹ Seeing the wealthy Europeans reminded the poor Muslims daily of their inferior status. Algeria also suffered from low productivity, large-scale unemployment among the Muslims, and tremendous population growth. A predominate agricultural economy, Algeria produced only enough foodstuffs to feed two-thirds of its population, and production failed to keep step with population

¹⁰⁶ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 31.

¹⁰⁷ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 238.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 242.

¹¹⁰ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 133.

¹¹¹ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 34.

growth.¹¹² More importantly, not only did the Europeans have farms several times larger than Algerian Muslims, the most fertile land was seized by French settlers. Most Muslim farmers were forced to work small land plots that not only yielded lower income per acre, but could also not meet the basic food requirements.¹¹³ Most farmers were forced to work as either as agricultural laborers on the large European combines or as industrial employees inside Algeria or France. However, the agricultural work was seasonal, and the combined industrial capacity of France and Algeria could only absorb approximately 600 thousand Algerians. The result was gross unemployment. In 1954, unemployment was estimated at 500 thousand; however, that figure would easily exceed 2 million, nearly 25 percent of the population, when both male and females were factored.¹¹⁴

Social tensions between the *colons* and Algerian Muslims arose from two main sources. First, the colons had a mentality of superiority over the Muslims.¹¹⁵ The fact that the French settlers were able to “modernize” Algeria fed to their feeling of superiority. Second, the colons feared reprisal by the Muslims. The propaganda, “the suitcase or the coffin,” produced by the Algerian nationalists, specifically threatened violence against the Europeans, created insecurity among the colons causing them either to leave Algeria, or arm and fortify their communities.¹¹⁶ In 1956, when the French Army finally gained the military initiative from the Algerian nationalists, the colons demanded that Paris create military tribunals to remove the guerrilla prisoners from the overcrowded civilian court system as well as demanded harsher/capital punishment.¹¹⁷ More importantly, the colons sought to preserve their status at all costs, and therefore blocked any form of legislation from Paris or the Governor-General that would upset the status quo.

¹¹² American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 248.

¹¹³ Gillespie, *Algeria: Rebellion and Revolution*, 34.

¹¹⁴ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 248.

¹¹⁵ Ibid.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 154.

Despite France's attempt to declare Algeria a domestic issue, in every area, politically, economically, socially the French were an invader, an external force. Moreover, to the mindset of the Algerian Muslim, the French swore they would never leave Indochina—and yet they left. The French swore they would never leave Tunisia—and yet they left. The French swore they would never leave Morocco—and yet they left.¹¹⁸ Ultimately, the Algerian Muslims viewed the promise of French reforms as a sign of weakness, and it only solidified their position that violent direct action was the best path to achieve independence.

2. Variable 2: Did the Strong Actor have any COIN Experience?

Generally speaking, the French had experience in counterinsurgency from their campaigns in Indochina as well as the revolutions in Morocco and Tunisia. In addition, the French adjusted their conventional military tactics in Algeria to contend with FLN/ALN and militarily seized the initiative from the nationalists by 1956. However, even with their COIN experience, the 1954 revolution caught France by surprise. More importantly, the French were not only slow to react, which afforded the nationalists time to begin controlling the population, but they also employed a conventional force to fight a counterinsurgency. These two blunders were costly. The relative quiet following the 1945 uprising created a false sense of security for France. As such, the French underestimated the scale of the revolution and the type of force required to quell it. The French believed it was another tribal uprising that could be crushed relatively easily. When it became apparent that this was indeed a revolution, the French were ill-prepared to deal with it. “It lacked units in France suitable for this kind of warfare.”¹¹⁹ The French Irregular Warfare experienced troops had yet to return from Indochina and the units that were initially sent to Algeria were conventional forces created for a European war. “Heavy and massive, equipped to fight a frontal war, they proved to be proved to be

¹¹⁸ Galula and Rand Corporation., *Pacification in Algeria 1956–1958*, 17.

¹¹⁹ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 257.

un-adaptable to the geographic conditions of combat in Algeria, and ineffectual against the extremely flexible techniques of guerrilla warfare.”¹²⁰

Initially, the French response was ill equipped to handle local conditions. During the first 15 months of the revolution, the French Army employed small scale combing operations. Multiple battalions would mass—tipping the enemy of their intentions, encircle an area where guerrilla action had taken place, and then arrest all known nationalists as well as disarm the clans and tribes. The rebels also continuously outmaneuvered superior French units, whose transport vehicles were of no use in the rugged terrain.¹²¹ This left the pro-French Algerian’s defenseless against the ALN, yielded almost nothing, and only served to alienate more and more Muslims.¹²² Moreover, the French tactics provided the rebels a feeling of identity among the population. After the outbreak of the revolution, Algerian grievances were multiplied by the countermeasures of the French authority.¹²³ In the first few months of the revolution, the French carried out a campaign against the rebels without any clear objective. They were not officially at war. The small rebel force, supported by the civilian population was invisible to the French. Precious time was lost as the French struggled to adapt their techniques and equipment to a new kind of conflict. The only veterans were soldiers who had served in Indochina. More importantly, the French lacked a COIN doctrine.¹²⁴ The French essentially tried to enforce the 1947 statute granting the Algerian Muslims a larger voice in the colonial government. However, while it may have won over some support had it been instituted in 1947, by 1954, it was “too little, too late;” particularly after the revolution was underway.¹²⁵ On 1 November 1, 1954, 56 thousand French faced approximately 400 rebels.¹²⁶ By April 1956, the number had risen to 250

¹²⁰ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 257.

¹²¹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 77.

¹²² American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 257.

¹²³ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 139.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 78.

thousand, while intelligence estimates put the FLN/ALN at around eight thousand. However, they remained evasive, blending in with the population.¹²⁷

In April 1956, using lessons from their experience in Indochina, the French adopted the strategy of pacification, which would be achieved by creating Special Administrative Sections to re-establish contact and governance for under-governed areas throughout Algeria and by applying *quadrillage* tactics.¹²⁸ *Quadrillage* effectively applied a grid to the entire country dividing up into small units with the military garrisoning and controlling all movement.¹²⁹ Additionally, the French military presence was increased to 400,000 troops; jet fighters were replaced with slower ground support planes and helicopters. The borders with Tunisian and Morocco were thoroughly fenced off to cut the supply lines of the ALN, and areas with heavy ALN concentration were declared security zones. The locals in the security zones were moved into resettlement camps; all villages and hamlets were burned. Only French forces were allowed into security zones with orders to shoot anything that moved. The tracking of ALN forces was then left to small and mobile elite units that were handpicked, generally paratroopers. There were never more than about 50 thousand paratroopers, which was roughly the size of the ALN. The effectiveness of the French tactics forced the FLN/ALN to step up terrorist attacks in urban areas in an effort to disrupt the French pacification strategy.¹³⁰

Additionally, the French created a Center for the Teaching of Pacification and Counter-Guerrilla to prepare the French soldiers for the nature of revolutionary warfare.¹³¹ They also built internment camps, catalogued people and houses, and systematically destroyed small villages forcing resettlement.¹³² However, politically the pitfalls exceeded the military gains. If a new security zone village prospered, then the French received credit; however, if it failed to become a viable economic and social unit

¹²⁷ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 80.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 189.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*

¹³⁰ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare: 23 Summary Accounts*, 258.

¹³¹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 176.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 182.

then the nationalists quickly infiltrated and often operated under the noses of the French.¹³³ Throughout the security zones, the French controlled all income, travel, and transportation.¹³⁴ However, through propaganda the FLN exploited the negative aspects of the re-location policy.¹³⁵ The French threat of re-location caused many Algerians to emigrate to Tunisia and Morocco. These people were not only lost to the French cause, but were also alienated from their own country.¹³⁶

The French adapted themselves to the insurgency by changing military institutions as well as the political and economic nature of Algeria, which enabled the French army to regain the military initiative by 1956.¹³⁷ The three primary COIN tools: (Special Administrative Sections, *quadrillage*, and the resettlement system) deprived the nationalists of their mobility and a great deal of material and popular support.¹³⁸ In addition, the barriers reduced infiltration from Morocco and Tunisia.¹³⁹ Although the French adapted well, their government ultimately lost the desire to hold Algeria.

3. Variable 3: How was the Strong Actor Constrained?

Overall, it can be argued that France was not constrained either domestically or internationally in their effort to defeat the Algerian nationalists. At the onset of the 1954 Revolution, France was in fact over-extended militarily dealing with unrest in Morocco, Tunisia, as well as Indochina, which hampered its initial response to Algeria. In addition, the majority of French forces with experience in counter-insurgency warfare were still deployed to Vietnam. However, the outbreak of the revolution in Algeria affected the French decision to complete the negotiations with Morocco and Tunisia.¹⁴⁰ Simply stated, the French decided to cut their losses in Morocco and Tunisia and focus their

¹³³ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 184.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 185.

¹³⁵ Ibid., 187.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

¹³⁷ Ibid., 231.

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., 76.

efforts on Algeria. Having suffered a series of humiliating defeats in their colonies, the French people would not accept failure again.¹⁴¹ As a result, France put all its efforts into Algeria and, by the end of the war, had deployed nearly five-hundred thousand forces in Algeria. Moreover, the French military had felt they had been stabbed in the back by the politicians in Paris for their defeat in Indochina. “French military honor required a success to vindicate the earlier failure. No compromise would be made with the FLN-ALN. Indeed, a French solution to the Algerian question would have to be imposed.”¹⁴²

France also did not self-impose limitations on the use of violence to counter the FLN/ALN terrorist tactics. Paris granted Governor-General State of Emergency powers and life for rebels became more precarious.¹⁴³ France’s willingness to imprison and torture nationalist sympathizers is best characterized by their efforts during the Battle of Algiers. The French conducted a census in Algiers in January 1957 and identification cards were issued to all inhabitants. The French then sealed off the Muslim sector in the *Casbah*, and check points were established at the gates and all strategic intersections.¹⁴⁴ Anyone wanting to enter the *Casbah* had to clear these checkpoints and the French conducted random *ratissages* (raking operations) which were essentially cordon and search of specific neighborhoods looking for suspicious persons, weapons, and propaganda.¹⁴⁵ The French also used a system called *ilots* (islands) where one person in each family was responsible for the whereabouts of all other family members. The responsible man on every floor of a building reported to a building chief, who was responsible to a city block chief. This enabled the French to reach out and touch any Muslim in the Casbah within a few minutes.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴¹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 77.

¹⁴² Ibid., 159.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 81.

¹⁴⁴ Alistair Horne, *A Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954–1962* (New York: Viking Press, 1978).

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

Additionally, General Jacques Massu from the 10th Parachute Division was given police powers to maintain peace in the capital.¹⁴⁷ Massu authorized the use of torture, which enabled soldiers to root out terrorists and protect many more innocent people. In short, Massu excused the brutality of the French on the grounds of expediency.¹⁴⁸ The use of torture, however, provided the nationalists justification for their use of terrorist violence. The nationalists openly recognized they could not fight the French conventionally, and without some notable successes to hit the French, they would lose their popular support.¹⁴⁹ Interestingly, Algerians who had first reacted negatively toward the use of terrorist tactics gradually began to approve of the extreme measures after Massu took over.¹⁵⁰ Although most nationalists and urban terrorists were captured or killed, Massu's methods created solidarity among the Algerian population, strengthening support for the nationalists. By September 1957, Algiers was completely under French control, and Massu's tactics were applied to all other urban centers effectively eliminating terrorist attacks.¹⁵¹ The battle of Algiers was a tactical victory, but the strategic victory belonged to the rebels who gained from Massu's brutal tactics. If it was even possible, the distinction between Algerians and Europeans became even markedly clearer, causing the two communities to drift further apart.¹⁵²

Although the plight of the Algerian nationalists did receive international attention, there was no concerted effort placed on France by the international community to settle the Algerian question peacefully. France had maintained that Algeria was a legal part of France, and therefore, the United Nations (UN) had no jurisdiction over a domestic issue.¹⁵³ However, in September 1955, the UN General Assembly by the margin of one vote agreed to put the Algerian question on its agenda. Undeterred, Paris responded to the UN vote by removing its delegation to the UN General Assembly in October 1955,

¹⁴⁷ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 190.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

¹⁴⁹ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 234.

¹⁵⁰ Horne, *A Savage War of Peace*, 205.

¹⁵¹ Ibid.

¹⁵² Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 235.

¹⁵³ Ibid., 156.

and by imposing Martial Law in Algeria and granting special powers to the Governor-General in March 1956.¹⁵⁴ Although the issue of Algeria came before the UN annually, France was able to keep the UN from adopting any meaningful resolutions.¹⁵⁵ In fact, France did more to keep Algeria in the international news by making mistakes that brought attention to the nationalist cause. For example, French airplanes bombed a Tunisian village used by ALN rebels, French forces kidnapped a rebel leader in Morocco, and they captured a ship in international waters with weapons bound for rebel forces in Algeria.¹⁵⁶ These acts countered France's claim that Algeria was a domestic issue.

Clearly, France was not seriously constrained domestically or internationally during their campaign in Algeria. In fact, the French went "all in" and raised the level of violence beyond its societal norms, which included the use of torture, to try and secure a victory. Militarily, France had defeated the ALN by 1958; however, gradually France lost its political will under the new de Gaulle regime¹⁵⁷

4. Variable 4: Did the Strong Actor deploy a Force skilled in Irregular Warfare?

The French adapted themselves on the military level to combat the Algerian nationalist insurgency.¹⁵⁸ By 1958, France had won the military victory and took the initiative away from the insurgents. However, the FLN-ALN shifted the focus from military to political objectives and robbed the French of victory.¹⁵⁹ Although the French adapted themselves to counter the terrorist tactics used by the nationalists, they were slow in placing a non-conventional force on the ground to align both a military and political strategy to not only provide security, but also provide effective governance and earn popular support. Put simply, France failed initially to recognize the Algerian population was the conflict's center of gravity.

¹⁵⁴ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 156.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 258.

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, xi.

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, xii.

In mid-1956, the French Army in Algeria largely consisted of reservists and conscripts. In Indochina, not only were professional soldiers used, but also a large portion of the fighting force was not French. As such, relatively few French families were directly affected by the war in Indochina.¹⁶⁰ However, with over one million Europeans living there, the effort to defend Algeria was much more uncompromising.¹⁶¹ Because there were simply not enough professional soldiers, France drafted large numbers of young men, which completely changed the complexion of the French Army.¹⁶² Frequently, these conscripted, conventional soldiers had to be explained the difference between European France and African France.¹⁶³ These young conventional soldiers were simply not prepared to combat the guerrilla tactics used by the ALN. Additionally, the use of these young non-volunteers brought the harsh reality of warfare much closer to home for French families that factored heavily into France's political will.

The French conventional forces were constantly frustrated by the impossible task of identifying guerrilla forces among the population. In order to protect the population and gain popular support, the French forces needed to not only live among the population, both civil and military, but also establish governance that would connect villages with Algiers. However, the French conventional forces were unaccustomed to guerrilla warfare, and most commanders simply did not gear up for occupation.¹⁶⁴ In addition, the French use of *ratissages* was completely ineffective. After a search of an area, the soldiers left to search another area leaving the population vulnerable to the rebels. Those French soldiers who had fought in Indochina quickly understood the nature of the conflict in Algeria. "The ALN fought for the minds of men, not for territory; to win this conflict the French military establishment would also have to fight 'in the crowd.'"¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 175.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 175.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Ibid., 176.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid., 92.

¹⁶⁵ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 92.

Following their military successes against the ALN, the French began to shift their attention to the population. They created Specialized Administrative Sections with the task of bringing French administration to the rural areas within the *quadrillage* system attempting to provide basic services and construction projects.¹⁶⁶ Arab speaking French officers were sent to work with the population to build schools, provide medical and dental care, create jobs, and build village self-defense forces, aka *Harka* units.¹⁶⁷ Officers were assigned two tasks: 1) re-establish contact between the government and the people, and 2) Gather intel.¹⁶⁸ Additionally, the French attempted to attract more Muslims to government civil service to 1) spread governmental influence and reduced the widespread unemployment 2) raise status of Algerian employees by giving them management positions, 3) raise minimum wage for agricultural workers.¹⁶⁹ These new laws challenged the FLN/ALN and reacted by violently condemning any peasant who profited from these reforms would be considered an enemy of the people. Thus, Algerians who might have been tempted to accept civil service positions were threatened with death.¹⁷⁰ As the Special Administration System became successful, it forced the FLN to call a conference in Soummam valley to resolve internal differences and devise a program to counter the French gains.¹⁷¹

By the time the Special Administrative Sections had been instituted, the nationalists had done too much damage to French prestige and established fear too firmly in the minds of the Muslims. The response by the FLN/ALN speaks to the concern they had regarding the adjusted French strategy. Quite possibly, if France had not lost its political will, the Special Administrative Section program along with its non-conventional force would have succeeded in establishing security and governance to remote areas thereby affording more popular support for the French.

¹⁶⁶ American University and Jureidini, *Casebook on Insurgency and Revolutionary Warfare*: 23 *Summary Accounts*, 257.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 147.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., 149.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid., 157.

¹⁷¹ Ibid., 161.

IV. CASE STUDY: U.K. OMAN

That this House is greatly encouraged by the successful conclusion to the ten-year war in Oman, congratulates the Sultan's troops on achieving one of the very few victories over Communist-inspired rebels since the Second World War, records with pride the contribution made by hundreds of present and former members of the British armed forces, and pays special tribute to the work of the Special Air Service.

—A Motion in the British House of Commons December 17, 1975

A. BACKGROUND

In 1964, the Dhofar Rebellion began as a nationalist movement by the Dhofar Liberation Front (DLF) led by Mussalim bin Nufl.¹⁷² The Dhofar Rebellion was primarily based on social grievances, against the Sultan of Oman, Said bin Tamur.¹⁷³ The Sultan led Oman as a harsh, feudal ruler and created a country that has been described as a “medieval state.”¹⁷⁴ The Sultan's oppressive rule over Oman was highlighted by very poor living conditions of the population and his excessive force in dealing with them. In many ways, the Dhofar Rebellion was a natural uprising that was needed to improve the lives of the Omani people; however, it became an international concern once it was hijacked by communist-supported guerrillas.

In January of 1968, Prime Minister Harold Wilson announced the withdrawal of all British forces from the Arabian Gulf by 1971. This move was a bi-product of both the Sterling Crisis of November, 1967 and the inability of Britain to maintain its influence as a world power.¹⁷⁵ As the British started leaving the region, traditional powers like Oman, which depended heavily on British influence, became vulnerable. The new environment, without a superpower in the region, allowed Arab nationalists and Marxist radicals to create opposition groups throughout the gulf region.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷² W. Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19 (2008): 62.

¹⁷³ Ibid.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., 68.

¹⁷⁵ The 1967 Sterling Crisis drastically hurt the British pound's exchange rate in foreign markets. Ibid.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid.

The first major uprising was in South Yemen, where the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (PDRY) took power with support from both the Soviet Union and China.¹⁷⁷ Both communist countries saw the opportunity to sweep through the region and replace the regional dynasties with communist governments.¹⁷⁸ Oman was the next battleground for the communist movement in the region, and the nationalist rebellion in Dhofar was exploited for this purpose. The legitimate grievances of the nationalist movement were hijacked in 1968 by the radical Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG).¹⁷⁹ Similar to other communist insurgents groups, the PFLOAG took these legitimate issues and used them to pursue a Marxist state in Oman.

The Dhofar region of Oman is highly isolated from the rest of the country. The region is bordered by the Arabian Peninsula to the south and east, while hundreds of miles of desert separate it from the rest of Oman. To the West of Dhofar is very rough terrain which leads to South Yemen. The population in Dhofar was estimated at less than 100,000 people and the majority of the population lived along the coastal region.¹⁸⁰ The largest city in Dhofar was the coastal city of Salalah depicted in Figure 6.

¹⁷⁷ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 66.

¹⁸⁰ J. E. Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation in the Arabian Peninsula: The Rebellion in Dhufar," *World Affairs* 139 (1977): 278–295, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/20671698>.



Figure 6. Map of Dhofar Rebellion (From Peterson, 1977)¹⁸¹

Until the 1930s, when Sultan Said bin Tamur extended his authority to the Dhofar region, the area had been considered separate from Oman and fell under no ruling authority.¹⁸² The Sultan, however, not only extended his authority in Dhofar, he also made the Dhofar town of Salalah his permanent residence. In fact, the Sultan never

¹⁸¹ Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation," 278.

¹⁸² Ibid.

returned to Muscat after 1958.¹⁸³ Unfortunately, the close proximity of the Sultan was not a reward for the people of Dhofar; they were treated as subjects instead of citizens. The Sultan levied many restrictions on the Dhofaris beyond those in the rest of Oman.¹⁸⁴ These restrictions and the poor general treatment of the population led to a large number of grievances against the Sultan.

Even prior to the communist hijacking of the DLF, the Sultan's armed forces were completely inadequate to deal with an organized insurgency.¹⁸⁵ The Sultan's Armed Forces (SAF) consisted of only 2,000 armed men organized into two infantry battalions and a small border patrol assigned to the border with Abu Dhabi.¹⁸⁶ Furthermore, these forces were not even used in Dhofar because the Sultan had "decreed that security in Dhofar would be provided solely by the Dhofar Force, a company-sized private bodyguard led by a Pakistani lieutenant-colonel."¹⁸⁷ Another inadequacy of the SAF was the limited education of most of the Sultan's military.¹⁸⁸ This was a significant problem because the Sultan had few capable Omani military leaders to train, educate, and lead the SAF.

The Sultan understood that the SAF was not prepared to defeat the PFLOAG and, thus, turned to Britain to bolster their military support and help defeat the growing insurgency. While Britain was looking to move out of the area, Oman's only other external diplomatic connections were with Pakistan and the United States. The United States was already heavily involved in the Pacific and was in no position to assist. Pakistan was able to provide minimal support; however, they, too, were in no position to be the primary source of help to the Sultan. The Sultan's long-standing relationship to Great Britain, which dated back to 1646, was his primary target for garnering

¹⁸³ Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation," 278–295.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid.

¹⁸⁵ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 66.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

international support.¹⁸⁹ The Sultan had already turned to Britain to quell multiple security and insurgency issues within Oman in the previous 15 years, and Britain was already operating airbases out of Masirah and Salalah.¹⁹⁰

The timing of the Dhofar Rebellion was a precarious time for Britain. The British had just lost a large amount of their financial and military resources in WWII, and, politically, they were worried about possible fallout from deploying troops into a former sphere of colonial influence.¹⁹¹ Fortunately for the Sultan, Britain still believed they needed to protect the Suez and agreed to help the Sultan in a very limited, and preferably unreported, role.¹⁹²

Initial support to the Sultan was limited to seconded and contracted officers to lead the SAF.¹⁹³ These officers filled the needed gap in the SAF and provided leadership and training to the SAF troops. While some seconded British senior officers were on the Sultan's staff, the Sultan remained in charge of the military and maintained authority over how military action would be taken.¹⁹⁴ Ten seconded Royal Air Force (RAF) pilots made up the Sultan of Oman's Air Force (SOAF), which was a rag tag operation flown out of RAF Salalah. The initial campaign against the DLF was one of extermination. It not only managed to gain little ground; it actually made the situation worse.

B. INSURGENT FORCE–INDIRECT STRATEGY

The leader of the Dhofar Liberation Front was Mussalim bin Nufl. Nufl was a strong nationalist proponent who was a prominent figure in Dhofar. Around 1960, Nufl left Oman to find support for his movement in Saudi Arabia. While in Saudi Arabia, Nufl managed to join forces with the remaining rebels from the rebellion in northern

¹⁸⁹ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 66.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 62.

¹⁹¹ G. Hughes, "A Model Campaign Reappraised: The Counter-Insurgency War in Dhofar, Oman, 1965–1975," *Journal of Strategic Studies* 32 (2009): 278.

¹⁹² Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 64.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

Oman.¹⁹⁵ Later Nufl would be instrumental in merging membership of the Arab Nationalists' Movement, Dhofar Benevolent Society, and the Dhofar Soldier's Organization into the Dhofar Liberation Front.¹⁹⁶

The first few years of the rebellion, from 1964–1968, were generally unsuccessful. While the DLF managed to disrupt some of the Sultan's Dhofar Force in Dhofar, the operations designed to gain a presence in the coastal towns continually failed.¹⁹⁷ Perhaps the most successful operation was the near assassination of Sultan Said bin Tamur.¹⁹⁸ The communist influence from South Yemen, however, quickly changed the landscape of the Dhofar Rebellion.

In 1968, Communist members of the DLF removed many of the nationalists, including Nufl, and replaced them with radicals who had embraced communist ideals.¹⁹⁹ They established an organizational office in Aden, South Yemen, which strengthened their ties with the PFLOAG, China, and Iraq.²⁰⁰ During the movement's second congress, they accepted three resolutions.²⁰¹

1. To adopt "organized revolutionary violence"
2. To change the DLF name to Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf
3. To extend the scope of the revolution from Dhofar to Oman and the emirates of the Gulf

With support from new Communist allies, the movement increased its guerrilla actions and found quick success throughout the remainder of the 1960s.²⁰² The PFLOAG used its strong connections to the new communist South Yemen to attain

¹⁹⁵ Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation," 278–295.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰⁰ Ibid.

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid.

weapons, training, advisors, and support from China and Russia.²⁰³ By the end of the 1960s, the PFLOAG had over 2000 armed guerrillas and another 3000 militia members.²⁰⁴ The insurgents not only outnumbered the SAF, they were also better trained and more experienced fighters.²⁰⁵ This stark advantage led to quick successes in Dhofar.

By 1970, the PFLOAG had managed to extend its control over all of western Dhofar, Thamarit road, and the Jebel Samhan.²⁰⁶ This only left a few Dhofar coastal cities, including Salalah, under the Sultanate authority. However, physical barriers were the only reason these cities had not fallen to the PFLOAG.²⁰⁷ Dhofar had been successfully cut-off from the remainder of Oman and the PFLOAG controlled the only road access into Dhofar.²⁰⁸ The rapid success of the PFLOAG created an uprising across Oman, and many of the smaller movements in other parts of Oman began to intensify guerrilla attacks on the Sultanate.²⁰⁹ Oman was ripe for a national uprising against the Sultanate, and the PFLOAG was quickly building popular support, which was extending beyond Dhofar and into the remainder of Oman.

C. COIN FORCE–INDIRECT STRATEGY

1. Variable 1: Was the Strong Actor an External or Internal Counterinsurgent Force?

The Sultanate's closest ally was Great Britain. As previously mentioned, the relationship between the two countries dated back to 1646.²¹⁰ Initially, the Royal Navy acted as a protectorate for the Sultans of Oman in exchange for preferential treatment in

²⁰³ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

²⁰⁴ Ibid.

²⁰⁵ Ibid.

²⁰⁶ Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation," 278–295.

²⁰⁷ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Peterson, "Guerrilla Warfare and Ideological Confrontation," 278–295.

²¹⁰ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

commercial trade.²¹¹ Later, the British would agree to protect the Sultan and keep an operating air base in Salalah in exchange for a strategically important airfield on the island of Masirah.²¹²

Throughout the 1950s, the Sultan of Oman faced external and internal security issues, due to the many unsatisfied Arab nationalists within Oman.²¹³ In 1958, a Saudi Arabia-supported rebellion of Imam Ghalib bin Ali and 600 of his followers nearly led to the defeat of the Sultan.²¹⁴ However, the British were able to quell the rebellion and keep the Sultan in power. After the rebellion, Britain left seconded officers as part of the SAF and maintained the Salalah airfield in Oman.²¹⁵ These seconded officers and the equipment and supplies were funded by the Sultanate.²¹⁶ The British were offering “no free lunches.”

As the Dhofar rebellion intensified, British Special Air Service (SAS) troops were covertly deployed to Oman to help SAF forces fight the communist-backed PFLOAG.²¹⁷ However, the SAS troops, with a minimal British footprint, continued to work “by, with, and through” the local forces. While the SAS developed some specialized units (discussed later), they never formed “British only” units.

The British also operated in a supporting vs. supported role in Oman. While the British and more importantly the SAS, were clearly involved in advising the Sultanate, at no time did the British take control of the rebellion or operate outside of the Sultan’s wishes.²¹⁸ The supportive nature of the British forces allowed the Sultanate’s forces to

²¹¹ W. Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion,” *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19 (2008).

²¹² Ibid.

²¹³ Ibid.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 66.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

²¹⁷ Ibid.

²¹⁸ Hughes, “A Model Campaign’ Reappraised,” 271.

be the primary face of the COIN force. For all of these reasons, while the British were in fact an external power, they operated as an internal force “by, with, and through” the Sultan’s forces.

2. Variable 2: Did the Strong Actor have any COIN Experience?

By the end of the 1960s, the British had one of the most experienced post-WWII counterinsurgency forces in the world. The British had fought the Yishuv (Jewish) in Palestine, the Mau Mau in Kenya, the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) in Malaya, the Ethniki Organosis Kypriou Agoniston (EOKA) rebellion in Cyprus, the first insurgency in Oman, and the Sterling Crisis in Aden.²¹⁹ The COIN operation in Malaya is largely considered the model for fighting against an insurgent. However, shortly after the great success in Malaya, the British struggled to repeat the same level of successes in Cyprus and Aden.

The EOKA rebellion provides a great example of experience failing to bring success. At the end of the EOKA rebellion, the British had as many as 40,000 troops deployed to fight against a few hundred EOKA insurgents.²²⁰ According to Newsinger, “the lessons learned in Malaya and Kenya had been unsuccessful against a primarily urban guerrilla movement that organized and retained a high level of popular support.”²²¹ Ultimately, the EOKA would be quelled by international pressure from the Turkish government and not the British military.²²²

While the British were highly experienced in fighting a COIN conflict, history had shown that there were factors and variables they had not learned to overcome. When the British decided to increase support to the Sultan in Oman, there was still a high level of uncertainty as to how to defeat the insurgents. It would be easy to think of Malaya and believe the British simply used what they had learned in Malaya in the Dhofar Rebellion.

²¹⁹ John Newsinger, *British Counterinsurgency: From Palestine to Northern Ireland* (New York: Palgrave, 2002), 221.

²²⁰ Ibid.

²²¹ Ibid., 106

²²² Ibid.

However, it is more likely the British were worried about a repeat of the EOKA and Aden losses, when they chose a heavily constrained and largely covert response in Oman.

3. Variable 3: How was the Strong Actor Constrained?

The level of constraint in Oman was notable. First, the British did not want any overtly formed units in Oman.²²³ They wanted to remain in an advisory role publically and had no desire to get involved in a full-scale war in Oman.²²⁴ Secondly, Britain was struggling financially, and this heavily influenced how active they could become in Oman. The British simply could not fund a large scale COIN effort in Oman. For this reason, the British only deployed a small number of forces and also required the Sultan to pay for any costs of this support during the campaign.²²⁵ While this freed Britain's financial responsibility, it limited the available resources for weapons and conventional tactics of the SAF. These limited resources may be the single greatest factor in the eventual deployment of the British SAS.²²⁶

While the British could constrain themselves, it was much more difficult to constrain the Sultan and his strong-armed tactics. The primary problem was Sultan Said, who "refused to sanction any program that showed leniency towards his rebellious subjects."²²⁷ According to the Sultan, the only acceptable response against the insurgents was repression.²²⁸ This restriction led SAF forces to resort to cementing wells, burning homes, and limiting commerce in the rebellious areas of the country.²²⁹ Another constraint issue the British had to deal with was the Sultan's desire to strike against Yemen, which harbored many of the PFLOAG's leadership and supply lines.²³⁰ Because the British did not want to escalate the situation, they convinced the Sultan to

²²³ W. Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency: Britain and the Dhofar Rebellion," *Small Wars & Insurgencies* 19 (2008).

²²⁴ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 278.

²²⁵ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 75.

²²⁶ Tony Jeapes, *SAS Secret War: Operation Storm in the Middle East* (London: Greenhill, 2005), 11.

²²⁷ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 70.

²²⁸ Ibid.

²²⁹ Ibid., 70.

²³⁰ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 294.

use exiled Mahra tribesman (from Yemen) to perform these tasks (never British soldiers).²³¹ These operations were marginally successful; however, the key was not to escalate the situation in Oman.

It should be noted that the counterinsurgency only truly began to succeed after Sultan Said was replaced by his son Sultan Qaboos, who agreed to constrain the SAF from the on-going oppression of the local population.²³² Without this level of local constraint, the population might have continued to support the insurgent as the best available option.

4. Variable 4: Did the Strong Actor deploy a Force skilled in Irregular Warfare?

The initial British support to Oman was a conventional force. However, it became apparent that a population centric SAS force was ideally suited for the conflict. Sultan Said's stance of repressive tactics, and refusal to agree to a population centric strategy, did not allow the British SAS to operate in a special manner. Without the Sultan's agreement to change tactics, the British would not deploy SAS troops as they would not be able to implement their desired strategy.²³³

This limiting factor changed in late 1969, as the uprising from the Dhofar Rebellion was sweeping across Oman, and PFLOAG operations were intensifying. The British government recognized this pivotal moment and decided to back a covertly planned and executed coup to replace Sultan Said with his Royal Military Academy-trained son Qaboos.²³⁴ A few months before the coup, the British sent Lieutenant Colonel John Watts (commanding officer of the 22nd SAS) to Oman to prepare a COIN plan.²³⁵ After the bloodless coup resulting in Qaboos taking power, soldiers of the 22nd

²³¹ Hughes, "A Model Campaign' Reappraised," 294.

²³² Jeapes, *SAS Secret War: Operation Storm in the Middle East*, 253.

²³³ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 282.

²³⁴ Ibid., 281.

²³⁵ Ibid., 282.

SAS implemented the British COIN plan.²³⁶ These SAS soldiers formed British Army Training Teams (BATT) and were largely only changed in name for political reasons.²³⁷

Watt's plan was a clear attempt to gain the population's support, and he implemented a "clear and hold" strategy designed to reassure the domestic population and gain their cooperation against the insurgents.²³⁸ Hughes description explains the operation well:

The key role in civil affairs from 1971 onwards was played by the firqat forces, supplemented by the BATT Civil Action Teams (CAT). CAT operations usually began with the SAF establishing a garrison on the jebel for a firqat to occupy. Engineers would drill wells, and build a shop, school, clinic and mosque. Dhofaris would cluster around these ad hoc settlements for food, water, medical and veterinary care; at least one of the SAS soldiers in BATT team was a trained medic, and BATT also provided vets for animal husbandry. Civilians would in turn provide both intelligence and volunteers for the government's tribal militias.²³⁹

This program provided a sign of the government's commitment to the welfare of the people and denied the PFLOAG access to the population. "Clear and hold" also helped reassure the population that the government wasn't merely going to use them and then leave them without protection or support.

The BATT had a unique way of dealing with stability. First, they understood that the CAT teams would have to move from village to village, and that they would need the support of firqat (BATT trained GW forces) and BATT soldiers.²⁴⁰ However, after the initial stages of conflict, the firqat and BATT would move on to the next village, and a SAF unit would be brought in for security.²⁴¹ Next, a militia would be formed within the village. After the tribal area was secure, the SAF would move on as well.²⁴² This system took time, but it ensured that there would be no yo-yo effect on the villages between the

²³⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 281.

²³⁷ Tony Jeapes, *SAS: Operation Oman* (London: W. Kimber, 1980), 13.

²³⁸ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 283.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 290.

²⁴⁰ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 62.

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 77.

²⁴² Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 77.

insurgent and government forces. Firqat units were formed with ex-insurgent guerrilla soldiers who left the PFLOAG and started working for the government. These soldiers were able to move about Dhofar easily, and they were very capable at gathering intelligence and working within the population. Another critical tactic used by the BATT was to set up security lines (manned by regular SAF forces), which kept the guerrillas from reaching the main population areas.²⁴³ These steps created an incredibly stable environment and helped maintain the support of the population.

Prior to the introduction of the BATTs, public morale was extremely low. The only interaction the public had with the SAF was one of repression. However, along with the deployment of the BATTs, Watts's new five-point COIN plan included a medical campaign, veterinary campaign, intelligence campaign, information campaign, and finally the recruitment and training for Dhofar soldiers to fight for the Sultan.²⁴⁴ All of these were only possible after Qaboos took power and agreed to finance the civil development projects (which raised the cost of the war in Dhofar to 50 percent of Oman's GDP).²⁴⁵ These projects raised the morale of the people and delegitimized the initial cause of the rebellion.

Demonstrating military superiority was not a defined part of Watt's plan; however, the battle of Mirbat proved the strength of the BATT forces and psychologically changed the view of the Sultan's chances of winning in Dhofar.²⁴⁶ On 19 July, 1972, a force of approximately 300 PFLOAG guerrillas attacked a garrison of around 40 soldiers (which included 8 from the BATT).²⁴⁷ The attack was an attempt to gain a propaganda victory and push the government out of Mirbat.²⁴⁸ The conditions were ideal for the PFLOAG. Because the weather was so bad, air support was not

²⁴³ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 75.

²⁴⁴ Ibid., 72.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Hughes, "A 'Model Campaign' Reappraised," 271.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

available to the government forces.²⁴⁹ The government forces (aided by the BATT), however, proved highly capable and held off the guerrillas until the weather cleared and air support repelled the guerrillas.²⁵⁰ This victory contributed to the increase in the number of Dhofar guerrillas who decided to switch sides and become part of the firqats.²⁵¹ The firqat played “an important role in the clear and hold strategy” to gain back the Jebel.²⁵²

In Oman, the SAS plan and use of the BATTs provided a way for the government to reach the population by securing, improving, and remaining in the villages. The BATTs trained soldiers to minimize civilian casualties, provide for the population, and exploit every situation to gather intelligence.²⁵³ The BATT plan was centered on gaining population support. These operations went hand-in-hand with Sultan Qaboos’ social reform policy.²⁵⁴ The BATTs could have used heavy-handed tactics and still achieved tactical success. However, they would have shown the same oppressive tactics used by the previous Sultan and missed the opportunity to show the population that Qaboos cared about the people.

Ultimately, the tie between the BATT operations and the reforms taken by Sultan Qaboos provided reassurance to the population, which led to the downfall of the PFLOAG. While the British lack of available resources and reluctance to be seen in Oman may have seemed to be an Achilles heel, ultimately, both of these situations led to the deployment of the SAS and a true “by, with, and through” campaign. It is clear that the SAS led effort in Oman is an excellent example of using the appropriate force.

²⁴⁹ Hughes, “A ‘Model Campaign’ Reappraised,” 272.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 272.

²⁵¹ Ibid.

²⁵² Ibid., 283.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency,” 62.

V. CASE STUDY: U.S. PHILIPPINES

When a man leaves home, he sometimes travels more than mere physical distance. I went far beyond the usual bounds given a military man after I discovered just what the people on these battlegrounds needed to guard against and what to keep strong.

—Edward Geary Lansdale, 1971

A. BACKGROUND

The Hukbalahap (also known as Huk) movement was formed on 29 March 1942.²⁵⁵ The term Hukbalahap is an acronym for the Hukbo ng Bayan Laban sa Hapon, which translates to English as the “Anti-Japanese Army.”²⁵⁶ The movement was largely formed by members of the Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) and other socialist and peasant parties.²⁵⁷ The Huk’s objective was to wage a guerrilla campaign against the Japanese forces occupying the Philippines and to seize power.²⁵⁸ The stated goal of the Huk Rebellion was to institute land reforms and improve the lives of the peasant and farmer.²⁵⁹

Civil unrest in Luzon (the main island in the archipelago) was building prior to Philippine independence and WWII. Many of the farmers and peasants were dissatisfied with the land owners and the government, which allowed them to take advantage of the population. These land owners used land loan programs to get rich while the farmers struggled with large loan payments. By 1941, almost 80 percent of the farmers in Luzon were unable to pay back land and seed loans.²⁶⁰ However, the Japanese invasion during WWII made the situation worse. They pushed the peasant population hard and often

²⁵⁵ Lawrence M. Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection: A Case Study of a Successful Anti-Insurgency Operation in the Philippines 1946–1955,” *Historical Analysis Series* (Washington, DC: U.S. Army Center of Military History, 1986), 14.

²⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 16.

²⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

used harsh and brutal treatment on the already disillusioned population in Luzon. This harsh treatment led to the Huk movement as well as the idea of “Anti-Japanese Above All.”²⁶¹

The Huk movement, along with separate American-led guerrilla groups, did an excellent job against the Japanese and managed to keep the Imperial Army from securing the country and, more importantly, the population. The Huks continued to grow in strength and capability until the American invasion and subsequent Japanese withdrawal in 1945. In fact, the Huk movement had grown to over 100,000 members and supporters, including shadow governments of elected officials in the villages.²⁶² When the U.S. handed back control of the government to Sergio Osmena on 27 February 1945, the Huks were deeply rooted within the population and held more control of Luzon than the fledgling new government.²⁶³

Unfortunately, the U.S. and the Philippine government did not realize how powerful the Huks had become. They dismissed them as criminals and thugs. The Huks, however, were now a combat-tested force, with connections and shadow governments in most villages in Luzon. In many villages, the Huks took credit for liberation, and most people believed them.²⁶⁴ In the villagers’ eyes, they were the only entity working for the good of the population. Many of the Huk fighters and leaders had been trained by the Chinese Red Army and understood how to gain control of villages using communist tactics of manipulation and “crimes against the people” to turn the villagers against established leaders.²⁶⁵ The vacuum of good leadership and the poor insight of the U.S. and fledgling Philippine government allowed the Huks to become a dominant force in Luzon.

²⁶¹ Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection,” 12.

²⁶² Ibid, 16.

²⁶³ Ibid, 28.

²⁶⁴ Ibid, 25.

²⁶⁵ Ibid, 20.

B. INSURGENT FORCE–INDIRECT STRATEGY

The Huk strategy changed throughout the campaign; however, the main strategic aim was to take control of the government and replace the government with a communist people's government. The Huks originally had a two-phase strategy. The primary phase was a "legal Parliamentary struggle," and the secondary phase was an "armed struggle."²⁶⁶ To implement the primary method, they formed the Democratic Alliance (DA), which would gain support for the 1946 elections (the first under the newly democratic Philippine government). From 1946 to 1949, DA leaders would "attempt to win the support of the working and peasant classes."²⁶⁷ Once they managed to gain this support, they could then set up a "national revolutionary bloc of workers, peasants, and intellectuals to prevent the capitalist classes from extending their control over the nation."²⁶⁸ The second (armed struggle) stage would begin in 1949 and would capitalize on the support of the political base in the primary phase.²⁶⁹ According to Huk documents, this would lead to "a mass uprising" and ultimate replacement of the democratic government in 1952.

The many senior leaders in the Huk movement believed that an armed struggle was not the best option until the public support was strong enough; however, the election of 1946 caused a major shift in Huk strategy and the early start of the second phase. The Democratic Alliance was able to win six seats in congress (one to be filled by Louis Taruc, a strong guerrilla leader in the movement); however, newly elected President Manuel Roxas was adamant about ridding the country of Huks and denied them their seats in congress.²⁷⁰ After this event, Louis Taruc and other leaders believed that the armed struggle was the only viable strategy. In May of 1948, the Huk movement's main focus became an "armed struggle."²⁷¹

²⁶⁶ Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), 187.

²⁶⁷ Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," 37.

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 6.

²⁷¹ Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*, 188.

Despite the institution of an American-inspired democracy, U.S. financial aid, and new leadership, prior to 1950, the rural people of Luzon lived with a corrupt government and military system, which magnified the economic, land tenure, and social problems of the farmers and peasants.²⁷² The corrupt landowners used loan programs to get rich, while the farmers struggled with large loan payments. To make the situation worse, the government forces embedded within the population would also prey on the local population for money and food.²⁷³ The Huk rebellion had grown into a communist insurgency, and they continued to use land reform and the inadequacies of the government to bolster local support with the peasants and farmers.

The Huk structure had three distinct categories. First, were the party leaders and elites. These members were often very educated theoreticians who believed strongly in the communist ideals.²⁷⁴ They were mainly in Manila and spent very little time and energy in the barrios of central Luzon. These members spent most of their efforts within the labor unions and within the Democratic Alliance effort.²⁷⁵ This class of individuals included the party's general secretaries from 1945 to 1948: Pedro Castro, Jorge Frianeza, and Geruncio Lacuesta.²⁷⁶

The second category of Huks consisted of middle-level members. These members encompassed all the areas of the Huk operations and included guerrilla, labor, and peasant leaders. Prior to the communist Huk movement, most of these individuals were already influential figures within their areas of operation.²⁷⁷ For this reason, they were more worried about the fight against the government than the communist ideals. While the communist ideals were not primary, the long-range goals of replacing the government were widely understood, and the long-term commitment was shared

²⁷² Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," 6.

²⁷³ Ibid.

²⁷⁴ Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines*, 305.

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.

²⁷⁷ Ibid.

throughout this class of Huk.²⁷⁸ Many of the most notable Huk figures can be identified in this category; including Luis Taruc, Silvestre Liwanag, and Juan Feleo.

The final category of Huks held the rank and file members. These were primarily the peasants, laborers, and guerrilla fighters. Most of these members did not completely understand the communist ideals, and likely did not join the Huks for this reason.²⁷⁹ Most of them saw the Huk rebellion as a way to improve their living conditions and fight against a repressive government. These members were often swayed by the mid-level members to join the organization and, once they were indoctrinated, saw the rebellion as a fight for rights and a better life.²⁸⁰ Despite the fact that many of these members took arms and fought against the government, many were not hardcore Communist members.²⁸¹ They were merely joining the cause to make a better situation for themselves.

The center of operations for the Huks was in Central Luzon. While the party elite and political arm of the organization was firmly rooted in the capital city of Manila, the majority of the fighting was left to the guerrillas in the rural villages of Luzon. These Huk guerrillas were organized into field units or Field Commands (FCs) and included as many as 700 armed fighters.²⁸² The FCs would disperse small groups in and out of the peasant communities and villages in order to manipulate the population into supporting the cause.²⁸³ The main area of operation for the Huks was the four central provinces of Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, and Bulacan.²⁸⁴ Huk FCs also maintained safe havens in Mount Arayat (where the provinces intersected) and the Candaba swamp lands

²⁷⁸ Benedict J. Kerkvliet, *The Huk Rebellion: A Study of Peasant Revolt in the Philippines* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977).

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ Ibid.

²⁸¹ Ibid.

²⁸² Michael, McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft: U.S. Guerrilla Warfare, Counterinsurgency, and Counter-Terrorism, 1940-1990*, 1st ed, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1992), 604, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://www.loc.gov/catdir/toc/fy0604/90053398.html>.

²⁸³ Ibid.

²⁸⁴ Ibid., 1.

depicted in Figure 7.²⁸⁵ The Huks fought as a resistance force and never tried to take or hold territory. They resorted to ambushes, raids on government facilities, cut roads, and confiscated funds to sustain their operations and disrupt government agencies and forces. Huks were also very difficult to separate from the local population. A Huk FC member could easily blend into the peasant population and often had close family ties to many of the barrios they operated in and around.²⁸⁶

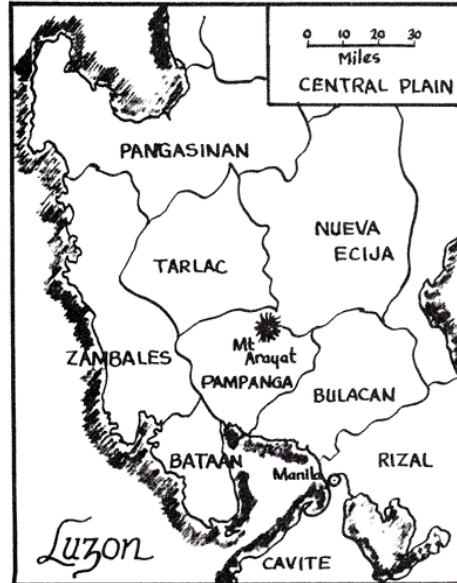


Figure 7. Map of Central Luzon (From Greenberg, 1987)²⁸⁷

C. COIN FORCE–INDIRECT STRATEGY

First, act as an ambassador of good will from the government to the people; second, kill or capture Huk

—Ramon Magsaysay

1. Variable 1: Was the Strong Actor an External or Internal Counterinsurgent Force?

Prior to 1950, the Philippine government and military was rampant with inadequate skill sets at all levels. After the Japanese withdrew from the Philippines,

²⁸⁵ McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*, chapter 4.

²⁸⁶ Ibid., 604.

²⁸⁷ Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection,” 7.

many of the leaders of the country, including the police and military, were entirely inadequate.²⁸⁸ They were generally corrupt and lacked discipline and a sense of obligation to their government.²⁸⁹ Intelligence was considered “sadly lacking,” leaders offered no direction, and there was no overall campaign strategy against the Huks.²⁹⁰ The Philippine government was in no position to fight off the Huk insurgents without external help, so they requested help from the United States.

While the United States was an outside power in the independent country of the Philippines, they were largely considered a trusted ally and power broker within the government. The United States recognized Philippine independence with the Treaty of Manilla, July 4, 1946; however, they kept very close diplomatic and military ties with new government. In fact, the Philippine government was created in the image of the U.S. system and was economically backed by American funding. The Philippines were also heavily influenced by American capitalism. Many American businesses were still operating in the Philippines, and they had a very high stake in the continued success of a democratic Philippines. It was common to see many Americans in Manila and in the larger villages and cities.

There are two main reasons Lansdale and his team were not treated as an external or outside force. First and foremost, they provided a very small footprint of advisors. This small footprint meant that most of the heavy lifting had to be done by host-nation forces. Very rarely were American soldiers seen during operations. Second, Lansdale and his team always worked with and for Magsaysay and the Philippine government. Publically, there was little to no discussion about the U.S. fighting against the Huks. Furthermore, Lansdale never took control of the operation. He maintained his advisory status, and, while he orchestrated a good number of concepts and ideas, he never forced them on Magsaysay or the Philippine government. While it is very easy for an advisor to

²⁸⁸ Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection,” 159.

²⁸⁹ Ibid.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 76.

want to take control of a situation, Lansdale ensured his team was never seen as an external or outside force taking advantage of the government or the people of the Philippines.

2. Variable 2: Did the Strong Actor have any COIN Experience?

At this point in history, the United States was a dominant conventional military. However, the United States was not only uninterested in COIN conflicts, they largely believed they could ignore them. Unfortunately, even after numerous COIN campaigns, the U.S. military still believed they could use overwhelming military power to defeat any type of enemy. The U.S. involvement in the Huk rebellion takes place at the tail end of a very costly U.S.-backed Greek Civil War and at the beginning of the Korean War. Both of these battles were part of the American communist containment strategy and showed the United States was willing to pay a high price to stop the spread of communism. Unfortunately, the large amount of money and American lives required to attain victory also showed how poorly the U.S. was prepared to fight against unconventional forces. The Huk rebellion is the only example of indirect/indirect conflict for the U.S. during this time and the American success is largely due to other interests instead of choosing the “best” strategy. It would be unfair to claim the U.S. had no competence in unconventional warfare; however, it would also be unfounded to claim their previous experiences had provided them the knowledge and competence to ensure victory over the Huks.

3. Variable 3: How was the Strong Actor Constrained?

The political restrictions for the U.S. in the Philippines were high. Politically, the U.S. had no desire to get heavily involved in the Philippines.²⁹¹ Current U.S. policy was more focused on fighting the urban Soviet-sponsored communist movements.²⁹² Another barrier to supporting the Philippine government was the recent U.S. intervention

²⁹¹ Edward Geary Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars; an American's Mission to Southeast Asia*, 1st ed. (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), 14.

²⁹² Ibid.

in Greece, where the U.S. found itself knee deep in a Greek civil war. Most U.S. leaders did not want to even consider another such endeavor.²⁹³

Financial limitations were also notable. In 1950, Ramon Magsaysay, as Chief of the Armed Forces Committee, traveled to Washington D.C. to request aid to fight the Huks. Despite real concern for the communist movement, he was only given ten million dollars.²⁹⁴ The Joint U.S. Military Advisory Group (JUSMAG), led by Lt Col Edward Lansdale, was told to spend as little as possible, because the limited defense budget was needed in Korea.²⁹⁵ However, this limited funding led to an almost non-existent U.S. footprint, and the non-conventional role of the U.S. military.

Prior to Lansdale's arrival and Magsaysay's appointment as Chief of the Armed Forces, the Philippine government used a completely unrestrained "iron fist" policy against the Huks.²⁹⁶ After election, President Roxas vowed to eliminate the Huk resistance within sixty days of his inauguration.²⁹⁷ He created a national "open season" on Huks. The Philippine military, police, and civil guards were sent on Huk hunts. These hunts were often associated with widespread terror against the people of central Luzon.²⁹⁸ Often these corrupt government agencies would use the Huk unit to extort food, supplies, and money from the largely poor peasant population.²⁹⁹ Roxas not only failed to eliminate the Huk resistance, his iron fist policy actually helped grow the rebellion exponentially.

After the failed iron fist policy of Roxas, Lansdale and Magsaysay realized they would have to win the support of the population to succeed.³⁰⁰ They immediately stopped the unconstrained operations against the Huks. They no longer permitted the

²⁹³ Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars; an American's Mission to Southeast Asia*, 14.

²⁹⁴ Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," 80.

²⁹⁵ Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars; an American's Mission to Southeast Asia*, 2.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

²⁹⁹ Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," 159.

³⁰⁰ Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars; an American's Mission to Southeast Asia*, 386.

government forces to prey upon the local population. Recognizing the heart of the problem, Magsaysay started by reforming the military. He quickly fired corrupt military leaders, changed units' geographical areas to allow a fresh start, and improved the quality of the soldiers.³⁰¹ He also provided villages with a way to communicate complaints directly to him and then addressed them immediately.³⁰² One of the more important efforts by Magsaysay was to increase the pay of the military and police forces.³⁰³ This raised the social level of the soldiers and police while at the same time providing them a wage that kept them from manipulating the local population for resources.³⁰⁴

A campaign that started as “open season” on Huks was completely reversed and turned into a campaign for the peasants. Constraint was the primary tool of the Magsaysay and Lansdale as the military and police forces worked among the population. This combination of resource restraint by the U.S. government as well as local restraint by Magsaysay and Lansdale were key variables in the ultimate defeat of the Huk Rebellion. See Table 2 for a chronology of the Huk rebellion.

³⁰¹ Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection,” 84.

³⁰² Ibid.

³⁰³ Ibid.

³⁰⁴ Ibid.

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Dec 1941 | Taruc and supporters establish base of operations in Mount Arayat/Candaba Swamp area |
| Mar 1942 | Hukbalahap organization established by Taruc and CPP leaders |
| Apr-May 1942 | Bataan and Corregidor fall to the Japanese |
| Jan 1945 | U.S. invasion of Luzon Island |
| May 1947 | Taruc returns to mountains and insurrection begins |
| Nov 1948 | Taruc's Huk faction adopts the name <u>Hukbong Magapalaya ng Bayan</u> , the People's Liberation Army, (HMB) |
| Apr 1949 | Huk forces murder former President Quezon's widow |
| Sep 1950 | Ramon Magsaysay appointed Secretary of National Defense and begins to revitalize Philippine military |
| Oct 1950 | Successful government raid on Politburo disrupts Huk operations |
| Feb 1951 | EDCOR project instituted for former Huks -- quickly becomes resounding success |
| Nov 1951 | Magsaysay provides peaceful general elections |
| Nov 1953 | Magsaysay elected President of Philippines |
| May 1954 | Luis Taruc surrenders to Ninoy Aquino -- mass surrenders follow |

Table 2. Chronology of the Huk Rebellion (From Greenberg, 1987)³⁰⁵

4. Variable 4: Did the Strong Actor Deploy a Force Skilled in Irregular Warfare?

Conditions in the Philippines favored the use of a specially trained force. First, the United States was highly constrained financially and politically and therefore not interested in conventional support to the Philippine government. Second, the Huks were a small force that did not mass in any one location, making conventional tactics more

³⁰⁵ Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," xi.

likely to cause damage to the civilian population than against the insurgents. The conventional “search and destroy” tactic had already been attempted by the Philippine government and had failed to eradicate the Huk insurgents. These operations have largely been considered to have bolstered support for the Huks. Therefore, Lansdale and his advisor team teamed with the Philippine government to create a very unique unconventional special force. Officially, Lansdale was assigned as the G-2 advisor of the JUSMAG.³⁰⁶ He was uniquely qualified for the job because of his service in the U.S. Office of Strategic Services and the Military Intelligence Service in the Philippines during the World War II, as well as his recent assignment as instructor of the intelligence and counter-guerrilla operations.³⁰⁷ Lansdale was given extreme flexibility, and he and Charles Bohannon (intelligence and unconventional warfare advisor) were responsible for advising and influencing the Philippine government. Under Lansdale’s guidance, Magsaysay transformed his military into non-conventional Battalion Combat Teams (BCTs) which were ideally suited for counter-guerrilla warfare.³⁰⁸ Lansdale and Bohannon also developed and trained special units, including Force X, Ranger Scout Teams, and Charlie Company.³⁰⁹ These forces specialized in deep penetration, pseudo guerrilla operations, psychological warfare, dirty tricks, and long-range patrol.³¹⁰

Lansdale and Magsaysay did not try to overpower the Huk forces. Instead, they used anti-guerrilla training and population-centric tactics to gain the support of the population. The major focus of the special units, and to some extent the BCT, was on the use of psychological operations, and they became highly effective.³¹¹ Force X, and later Charlie Company, was able to infiltrate enemy areas covertly and gain information, manipulate, and eliminate Huk leaders. Their prowess for deception and dirty tricks caused constant cohesion problems within the Huk ranks.³¹²

³⁰⁶ Greenberg, “The Hukbalahap Insurrection,” 96.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., 95.

³⁰⁸ Lansdale, *In the Midst of Wars; an American’s Mission to Southeast Asia*, 20.

³⁰⁹ McClintock, *Instruments of Statecraft*, 604.

³¹⁰ Ibid.

³¹¹ Ibid.

³¹² Ibid.

Lansdale and Magsaysay spent a great deal of time and energy on psychological tactics, which provided a large number of humiliations for the Huk forces. One example can be seen on the island of Panay, where Force X soldiers were able to mimic the local guerrillas and establish themselves as a legitimate Huk unit.³¹³ After three months of learning about the organization and gathering intelligence, they hosted a high command barbeque where they ambushed all of the Huk leaders on the island.³¹⁴ This operation single-handedly destroyed the Huk influence on Panay, which they were never able to re-attain.³¹⁵

Ultimately, the United States was able to help the Philippine government defeat the Huk Insurgency. Lansdale and his small advisory team were able to use an impressive psychological and guerrilla campaign, in conjunction with Ramon Magsaysay's reforms, to eliminate the causes of the Hukbalahap guerrillas. Lansdale and his staff of advisors created counter-guerrilla forces to disrupt, discount, and eliminate the Huk soldiers. Lansdale understood the importance of matching the strategic plan of the government. Lansdale's close relationship with Magsaysay ensured that the special units were used in conjunction with the government's message to the peasants and farmers. Magsaysay was also able to show the population that he had eliminated the corruption that was rampant in the government, police, and military. The population now believed they had a government that they could trust. Through the EDCOR program, Magsaysay and Lansdale showed the insurgents, peasants, and farmers that land reform was real, and that there was an alternative to supporting the Huks. Lansdale also ensured that the Philippine people saw the capabilities of the Philippine government, police force, and military, instead of a short-lived U.S. force to defeat the insurgents.

³¹³ Greenberg, "The Hukbalahap Insurrection," 124.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 24.

³¹⁵ Ibid.

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VI. CONCLUSION

The less aid given and the more the threatened country is compelled to rely on its own resources, the more effective the results will be.

—Sir Robert Thompson

A. CASE STUDY SUMMARY

Each of the preceding case studies provides insight into how a strong actor can defeat a weaker opponent with a matched indirect strategy. In each case, the weak actor chose an indirect strategy to avoid the strong actor's strength in direct conflict. Similarly, the strong actors matched the weaker actors by implementing their own indirect strategy. These similarities allow for key variables to be identified. To determine which variables offer the greatest implications, each of the research question variables from the case study analysis will be compared.

| | Internal | Experience | Constrained | Appropriate Force | Outcome |
|-------------|----------|------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Algeria | No | Yes | No | No | Strong Lose |
| | | | | | |
| Oman | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Strong Win |
| Philippines | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Strong Win |

Table 3. Case Study Analysis

1. Thesis Question 1—Was the Strong Actor Considered an Internal Counterinsurgent Force?

(Algeria—No, Oman—Yes, Philippines—Yes)

This question was designed to determine if the strong actor was seen as an external or internal force within the host nation, and whether this variable was important to the final outcome. If the population sees the strong actor as an external entity, they

may not ever fully support them. Since it is the authors' opinion that the population is the most important variable in COIN, it is important to understand whether the external (strong) power executed their COIN strategy as an internal or external force.

There are at least three ways to view this question. First, is the strong actor working under the host government's control? Second, does the strong actor make-up the primary fighting force?³¹⁶ Three, does the local population identify them as part of the government or as a separate entity that is manipulating the government? If the answer to any of these questions is yes, then the strong power is acting as an external force. However, if the strong actor can work with or under the host government, make-up a minority of the fighting force, and convince the local population that any success is due primarily to the local government, then they have succeeded in working as an internal force.

The three case studies provide an interesting insight into this concept of internal and external force. At first glance of Table A, the case studies would appear to be completely opposite of the expectation. How could the French be seen as an external force in a French Province, while British and American troops are labeled internal forces in Oman and the Philippines? Even though the French had the majority of their force deployed from within France, they had no local partner that the local population majority could identify. The Algerian administration was merely an extension of Paris. In contrast, in Oman and the Philippines the external powers were able to work "by, with, and through" the local military and police without being seen as an occupying force. In both Oman and the Philippines, the strong worked in cooperation with and largely under the governments command and authority. Lastly, in both cases, the host government was responsible for the majority of the fighting force, and the face of the counterinsurgency was indeed the host government.

³¹⁶ Thiel et al, "Beyond FM 3-24: Readings for the Counterinsurgency Commander" *Small Wars Journal* (2010): 1–11, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://smallwarsjournal.com/blog/journal/docs-temp/628-thiel.pdf>.

2. Thesis Question 2–Did the Strong Actor have any COIN Experience?

(Algeria–Yes, Oman–Yes, Philippines–Yes)

In each of the case studies, the strong actor had experience in COIN. While initially the expectation was that previous experience would have provided critical lessons learned, it remains unclear if this is as important in a COIN environment. Certainly, experience can be associated with better performance; however, the COIN environment changes so rapidly and varies so much, that it is conceivable that previous experience has the potential to provide both positive and negative impact on the outcome of a conflict. The Oman case study shows how the British mistakenly took concepts from Malaya and used them with little or no success in Cyprus and Aden.

Since all three case studies showed strong powers with previous experience, this variable cannot be isolated by this study and shown as a primary variable for planners and decision makers. However, it is worth repeating that history has proven that no two COIN conflicts are the same; therefore, the successful tactical decisions in one campaign may not be exportable to another campaign. Planners and decision makers must fight the urge to use successful COIN cases as exact templates on the basis of success alone.

3. Thesis Question 3–Was the Strong Actor Constrained?

(Algeria–No, Oman–Yes, Philippines–Yes)

Constraint in this context can be referred to two different things. First, it can attempt to measure the amount of constraint the strong actor is under when operating in the host country. This type of constraint would consider variables such as the number of troops, financial support, and allowable tactics. This type of constraint can be generated by the strong actor's own nation, the host nation, or the international community. The second type of constraint considered is the constraint exercised by the host government and strong power on the population. This type of constraint considers how the population is affected by operations against the insurgents and determines how the COIN force will interact when dealing with the population. Population based constraint would include allowable tactics and amount of force used against the insurgent.

Again, the outcome of this analysis proved counter-intuitive to the basic nature of war. The results show that the constrained strong actors actually achieved victory, while the unconstrained actor failed. Typically, the expectation is that when a large force can use its overwhelming advantage on the insurgent, they will be able to annihilate them. However, it is apparent from all three cases, when one uses overwhelming force it will often bolster the insurgent because of the collateral damage done to the population. In both Oman and the Philippines, the government started with hardline tactics against the insurgent and the goal was extermination. However, in both situations, the COIN plan changed to reflect the necessary condition of population support and military and police forces were constrained from hurting the population.

In Algeria, the French were given full leeway by the international community to maintain its Province in Algeria. Similarly, France was willing to use as many resources as they had to keep the precious resources of Algeria under French rule. In each of the successful COIN operations, the British and Americans were highly constrained by both internal politics as well as international politics. Both powers were unwilling to send precious resources and only sent what they considered to be the bare minimum to either conflict. It is counter-intuitive to believe that a constrained military can be more effective; however, in the three cases analyzed, this is true.

4. Thesis Question 4–Did the Strong Actor deploy a Force skilled in Irregular Warfare?

(Algeria–No, Oman–Yes, Philippines–Yes)

The concept of using appropriate force can be difficult to define. In this thesis question the goal was to determine whether the strong actor deployed the ideal force for the COIN environment and whether they performed in an appropriate manner. It was obvious from the Oman and Philippine case studies that a large part of the COIN success was due to both the type of troops used and the manner in which they were deployed. In both cases, constraint led to a small force being deployed, and, in both cases, the forces responsible for the campaign were SOF.

SOF forces were also utilized in Algeria; however, unlike the SOF forces used in the Philippines and Oman, they were not used in the same manner. Algerian SOF was used in a supportive role to the more conventional forces running the COIN operation. In contrast, the two successful cases used SOF in a supported role. It appears that the efforts of SOF can be lost, when they are not used in a SOF driven campaign. Also, as discussed earlier SOF was working under the host nation government. The small footprint and use of SOF led to a reliance on working “by, with, and through” the host country forces. In Oman and the Philippines, the SOF forces had viable government and police forces to partner with. In Algeria, the French had no viable local force to work “by, with, and through.”

This study highlights the need for strong actors to constrain themselves, deploy the right force, and work internally within the host nation. It is no coincidence that these variables are all closely tied to one another. Each is highly dependent on the other variables. For this reason, all three variables must be considered as planners and decision makers look to apply these concepts to future campaigns.

B. IMPLICATIONS

The very nature of irregular warfare lends itself to the fact that almost every situation is different, and therefore a one size fits all solution does not exist. However, because insurgencies often share some common characteristics, defense planners from a strong power should understand that an indirect approach is the best method to counter a weak actor. Moreover, the findings from this paper’s case study analysis point out three additional considerations that are not only inter-related, but are also important factors in determining asymmetric conflict resolution: how the strong actor is constrained; the type of force used by the strong actor; and whether the strong actor is an internal or external counterinsurgent force. As such, a strong actor must account for these additional factors in order to secure the best chance of victory in an asymmetric conflict.

1. Constraint is Good

Ironically, a strong actor that is constrained in its capacity to conduct Irregular Warfare turns out to be a critical factor in determining success. It does not seem to

matter the source of constraint (political, economic, or military considerations), but what does matter is that the strong actor's response is limited. As previously mentioned, in both the Oman and Philippine case studies, the strong actor was limited in the resources it was either willing and/or had available to apply to the counterinsurgency effort, yet those were both extremely successful asymmetric conflict campaigns. Whereas, the French viewed Algeria as such a critical interest to France, they were willing to pull out all the stops in an effort to secure victory. Yet this unconstrained approach ultimately led to France's loss of political will.

Even though France had a significant interest in Algeria, and exhausted countless resources trying to save Algeria, ultimately, Paris' survival was not on-the-line and thus Mack's interest asymmetry argument holds true for the French loss in Algeria. However, Mack's argument does not explain the U.S. and U.K. victories in the Philippine and Oman, respectively. In fact, it could be argued that the U.S. and U.K. had even less at stake than the French in Algeria, and it was precisely this constrained approach that enabled the strong actors to retain their political will and secure victory. Moreover, a constrained approach counters Merom's principal argument concerning regime type. When strong powers use a constrained approach it enables democratic states and their societies to agree on what is necessary to win a protracted, violent conflict in a distant land.

Without question, the constrained logic is counter-intuitive. If asked, defense planners would undoubtedly rather have more resources than less to fight a war—both conventional and non-conventional. However, as illustrated in Oman and the Philippines, having few resources forces the counterinsurgent to make do with what they have. More importantly, the constraint factor is not unique to the U.K.'s efforts in Oman and the U.S. involvement in the Philippines.

Hy Rothstein does a great job outlining the United States' inherently constrained approaches, which has sometimes prevented application of the excessive American "way of war." First, the U.S. involvement in El Salvador beginning in the 1980s to quell a communist insurgency was significantly constrained primarily because the American

government was still haunted by its failure in Vietnam.³¹⁷ In fact, the United States capped its support to just 55 personnel to train the Salvadoran Armed Forces (ESAF).³¹⁸ Limiting the amount of support to El Salvador enabled the politicians in Washington to distance its efforts from any comparisons to Vietnam. Additionally, since it was not a high-priority mission for the Defense Department, career-minded servicemen did not volunteer to deploy to further their careers.³¹⁹ Instead, a small cadre of Special Forces familiar with the culture, environment and language were able to provide a consistent strategy and support to the ESAF.³²⁰ Perhaps, more importantly, the small U.S. presence and small price tag also kept the U.S. support “below the radar” of the American people enabling it to maintain its political will to defeat the protracted (12-year) insurgency.

Second, the current U.S. involvement in the Southern Philippines to defeat Islamic terrorists/insurgents has been naturally constrained militarily and economically by the heavy U.S. commitment in both Afghanistan and Iraq. In addition, since it is a sovereign state, the United States would have to get permission to station U.S. forces in the Philippines.³²¹ Serving in a trainer and advisor capacity, 160 Special Forces personnel deployed to the Southern Philippines in 2002 to work “by, with and through” the Philippine Armed Forces (AFP).³²² In fact, in the Status of Forces Agreement between the United States and the Philippines, U.S. military personnel are not permitted to initiate combat operations, and they are only allowed to use deadly force in self-defense.³²³ Yet, just like the U.S. effort in El Salvador, the constrained U.S. approach has been extremely successful. The AFP, with U.S. assistance, has been able to reduce

³¹⁷ Hy S. Rothstein, “Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare in an Era of Collapsing States,” *Third World Quarterly* 28, (2007): 279, accessed November 10, 2011. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4017700>.

³¹⁸ Ibid., 279.

³¹⁹ Rothstein, “Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare,” 280.

³²⁰ Ibid., 282.

³²¹ Ibid., 283.

³²² Ibid., 284.

³²³ Ibid., 283.

the terrorist/insurgent presence in the Southern Philippine Islands, to regain control of the population, and improve the capacity of the AFP—evidenced by a 70 percent force reduction in the area.³²⁴

2. The Right Force for the Job

Consistent with being constrained, the strong actor must also use the appropriate force in an Irregular Warfare environment. This too may be somewhat counter-intuitive for defense planners of strong power nations, because when you have a superiorly equipped and trained military (i.e., the United States), the inclination is to use that force in any conflict scenario. However, as evidenced in all three case studies, the use of conventional forces is not the right tool for the job in an Irregular Warfare environment. According to Edward Luttwak, military organizations exist on a spectrum between being purely attrition based on one end, and purely relational-maneuver on the other end.³²⁵ While no units are purely attrition or purely relational-maneuver, primarily attrition based units, such as an infantry or armored division, defeat the enemy through the efficient application of massive amounts of firepower, winning by wearing down the enemy.³²⁶ An indirect v. indirect conflict environment is exactly the opposite. The measure of effectiveness in a counterinsurgency is not the number of enemy killed. It does not make any sense to adopt an indirect strategy, but then use then use a conventional force that was created for attrition warfare. Instead, the strong actor must use a force specifically trained to operate in an Irregular Warfare environment.

Defeating an insurgency is just as much about the battle for popular support as it is about defeating the enemy militarily. The French were not defeated militarily in Algeria, they lost the political war. The same argument is often made in describing the United States' failed efforts in Vietnam. The insurgents' lifeblood (people, guns and money) is primarily extracted from the population. More importantly, if the insurgency

³²⁴ Rothstein, "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare," 285–286.

³²⁵ Edward N. Luttwak, "Notes on Low-Intensity Warfare," *Parameters* 13, (1983): 336, accessed November 10, 2011, <http://handle.dtic.mil/100.2/ADA518348>.

³²⁶ Ibid.

is supported by the population (either forcibly or willingly) then the insurgent force will be able to blend in with the population making identification extremely difficult. This is exactly what happened in Algeria—as well as other previous strong actor asymmetric conflict failures like the U.S. efforts in Vietnam and the Soviet Union in Afghanistan. Yes, it is true that successful insurgencies often receive external support, which is Record’s principal argument. However, *the* battle is for support from the local population.³²⁷ If the insurgency does not have popular support, then any external assistance received will be marginalized because the insurgents will be isolated, and thus easily identified. Therefore, any COIN military strategy must be directly tied to the political strategy of earning popular support. The best, and perhaps the only, effective way to control a population is to live among it. This is not about winning the proverbial “hearts and minds.” Instead, this is about working with the indigenous population so that they can become self-reliant. The conventional forces used by France in Algeria were not only ill-equipped to combat the guerrilla warfare tactics used by the FLN, but they were also not trained to live among and work with the population.³²⁸ The exact opposite was true in both the Philippine and Oman case studies where highly specialized forces were deployed to work with and train the indigenous military structure as well as live among the local population. In fact, the U.K. made it a policy to not send regular combat forces to Oman.³²⁹ Instead, the U.K. used a limited number of SAS personnel, which not only compelled the Omanis to conduct the most of the fighting, but it also made the Omanis as independent and resourceful as possible.³³⁰

Once again, the success of limited non-conventional forces in an asymmetric conflict is not unique to this paper’s Philippine and Oman case studies. The U.S. involvement in El Salvador and its current involvement in the Southern Philippines are both great examples of using a limited number of personnel trained in irregular warfare to work by, with and through the host nation to defeat an insurgency. In El Salvador, U.S.

³²⁷ Gordon H. McCormick, “Mystic Diamond” (lecture, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey CA, 12 August 2010).

³²⁸ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 172–187.

³²⁹ Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency,” 80.

³³⁰ Ibid.

Special Forces not only developed a close working relationship with their ESAF counterparts, but also worked at the village level to establish local security and civil defense programs, as well as deliver civic action projects that promoted social and economic reform.³³¹ The same is true in the Southern Philippines. Working with the AFP, U.S. Special Forces used their language skills and cultural knowledge to develop a rapport at the village level, and Special Forces medics provided medical assistance, which helped earn the trust of the locals.³³² Additionally, through civil engineer augmentation, the small U.S. teams established civic action projects that could be sustained by the local population. In both instances, using a small number of Special Forces advisors and trainers did not overshadow the efforts of the host nation and it obligated the host nation security forces and local population to do the majority of the work for itself. These same results cannot be achieved by using a conventional force primarily trained in attrition warfare. Moreover, by primarily using forces trained in IW addresses Merom's argument; democratic societies do not need to endure high friendly casualties or maximize violence against a much weaker enemy because the majority of the fighting is accomplished by local forces.

Finally, not only is it the appropriate force to carry out an indirect strategy because of the skills they bring to the fight, but there are also several inherent advantages to using forces trained in irregular warfare for an asymmetric conflict. First, in an Irregular Warfare environment, the COIN force cannot commute to the fight from a secure location and expect to earn the trust of the populace.³³³ This not only demonstrates commitment by the strong actor and helps hold secure areas, but it also compels the indigenous population to work toward self-reliance. In Algeria, any areas secured by French forces were immediately returned to FLN control after the French vacated.³³⁴ Second, Special Forces typically operate in small numbers and are therefore a low cost / low visibility option when compared to deploying a conventional unit. This

³³¹ Rothstein, "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare," 280.

³³² Ibid., 284.

³³³ Petraeus, David., 2010. Commander International Security Assistance Force Counterinsurgency Guidance.

³³⁴ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 67–84.

helps keeps their mission out of the scrutiny of public spotlight. Again, consider how little one hears today about the U.S. Special Forces effort in the Southern Philippines in comparison to the primarily conventional efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan. Third, because using a small force, with relative limited cost, relative limited attention, and the local population doing most of the work, helps the strong actor retain its political will throughout the protracted nature of defeating an insurgency.

3. Viable Indigenous Governance

The previous section identified the need to synchronize the strong actor's military and political strategy in a COIN environment. Part of that equation is using forces trained in IW at the local level to not only help root out the insurgents and defend the "village," but to also help tie local level governance to the state. The other piece of that equation is the COIN force must have a viable government to work by, with and through in order to be successful. A viable state government in the eyes of the indigenous population is directly related to whether or not the strong power COIN force is an external or internal actor. If the strong actor is conducting the majority of fighting then it will be viewed as an external or even occupying force; and the state will likely never earn popular support. Additionally, the presence of a large external force creates opportunities for the insurgency to exploit because it demonstrates the weakness of the host nation. Simply stated, it makes it easy for the insurgent to blame its grievances on the state and/or its strong actor ally.

Fundamentally, a state exists to deliver political goods such as security, education, healthcare, commerce, and infrastructure to its citizenry.³³⁵ However, a state also derives its power, and therefore its capacity to deliver political goods, from its ability to control popular behavior.³³⁶ Thus, the relationship between a state and its populace is dependent upon each other. On the one hand, a society depends on the state to deliver quality political goods. On the other hand, the state must be able to deliver those political goods

³³⁵ Robert I. Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror* (Cambridge, MA: World Peace Foundation, 2003).

³³⁶ Joel S. Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States: State-Society Relations and State Capabilities in the Third World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988).

or it risks losing its power and influence over society. Therefore, in order for a state to achieve power and stability, it must establish control over popular behavior. Joel Migdal defines state social control as “[t]he successful subordination of people’s own inclinations of social behavior or behavior sought by other social organizations in favor of the behavior prescribed by state rules.”³³⁷ In essence, people have ceded their power, or their right to make the rules, to the state, with an expected return in the form of political goods. If a weak state fails to deliver quality political goods, or they are delivered by an external force/actor, this will eventually lead to a loss of social control and state instability.³³⁸ The indigenous state must be able to provide these political goods and services on its own; otherwise, the external force will have little chance of being successful as the state will be mired in instability. The key is to assist the host nation in critical areas, and not make them dependent on external support.³³⁹

Although France viewed itself as the legitimate government in Algeria, like any colonial power, it clearly did not have popular support from the majority Muslim population.³⁴⁰ Moreover, beyond the European quarter of Algiers, the French administration in Algeria never extended viable governance throughout the country. Even if Metropolitan France had deployed the right force to quell the FLN, it likely would not have been able to control the population because of the weak nature of the French administration in Algeria. By contrast, both the U.S. and U.K. were able to successfully work through the Philippine and Oman governments, respectively. This same argument can be made for the U.S. efforts in El Salvador and the Southern Philippines. In these successful COIN campaigns the strong actor’s allies needed external help defeating an insurgency. However, because the host nation was ultimately able to spread good governance, and because the host nation security forces did most of the fighting, the strong actor was not viewed as an external occupying force. A viable host nation

³³⁷ Migdal, *Strong Societies and Weak States*, 22.

³³⁸ Rotberg, *State Failure and State Weakness in a Time of Terror*, 1–13.

³³⁹ Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency,” 80.

³⁴⁰ Heggoy, *Insurgency and Counterinsurgency in Algeria*, 4–20.

government must be able to coordinate both its civil and military efforts; otherwise, no amount of external support will be enough to achieve victory.³⁴¹

C. RECOMMENDATIONS

When you can whip any man in the world, you never know peace.

—Mohammed Ali

The purpose of this paper was to identify important variables beyond adopting a matched indirect strategy that could help strong powers defeat a weaker adversary. It would logically follow that absence of these variables would be a litmus test for strong actors to determine whether or not it should get involved in an active asymmetric conflict. To be clear, the complexities of Irregular Warfare are so great that there is no magic bullet that will work in every scenario. Indeed, victory does have a thousand fathers. However, this paper has identified three key considerations that a strong actor should account for if it is going to be successful in defeating a materially weaker adversary in an indirect v. indirect conflict.

What does this mean for strong actor defense planners? First, counter-intuitively the strong actor must resist the urge to use its full arsenal against a weaker opponent. The evidence is overwhelming that being constrained compels the indigenous force to do the brunt of the fighting. As illustrated in the Oman case study, when additional forces were needed, the U.K. declined sending more troops.³⁴² In response, the Omanis not only tripled the size of its armed forces, but even when this proved insufficient, Oman reached out to regional allies for additional troops.³⁴³ “To paraphrase Milton and Rose Friedman, when you spend your own money on yourself, you are motivated to get what *you need* most at the best price. When you spend other people’s money on yourself, you get what *you want most* but price does not matter.”³⁴⁴

³⁴¹ Ladwig III, “Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency,” 81.

³⁴² Ibid., 80.

³⁴³ Ibid.

³⁴⁴ Ibid., 80.

Second, the strong actor should primarily use forces that are trained in Irregular Warfare. This almost seems too elementary, but the inclination of a strong power is to want to use its large, well-trained and well-equipped army that can quickly defeat the enemy. This does not mean that conventional forces are never required, or that insurgencies can never be quickly defeated. However, if the security situation is so bad that conventional forces are required that cannot be provided by the host nation or regional allies, then the Special Forces should at least be the supported command. The key for the strong actor is to tailor the support based on the expertise lacked by the host nation.³⁴⁵ Because the enemy is often not easily identified in an asymmetric conflict environment, the strong actor must attempt to isolate insurgents by winning the battle for control of the population. This is best achieved by using personnel that are trained to live and work among the indigenous people and help tie the local community to state governance. Moreover, asymmetric conflicts are typically protracted in nature. By providing a small contingent of Special Forces, it reduces the price tag and the visibility for the strong actor, which not only decreases the chance it will lose its political will, but also increases the chance of victory.

Third, the strong actor cannot be viewed as an external COIN force; otherwise, it has little chance of controlling the population without using repressive force. While this certainly can be accomplished, it will increase the price tag by requiring additional resources, and ultimately drain the strong actor's political will. Instead, the strong actor must have a viable indigenous governance system to work by, with, and through. The host nation must be capable of delivering political goods and services to its populace with the assistance of the strong power, as well as coordinate its military and political strategies to be deemed as viable. To this end, the strong actor must consider host nation's governance capacity as part of the Irregular Warfare environment and it must be a key consideration before committing to an active asymmetric conflict. While a viable host nation government appears critical to defeating a weaker adversary, this paper does not address the issue about what a strong actor should do if a viable host nation government does not exist; however, it would be a great area to launch additional

³⁴⁵ Ladwig III, "Supporting Allies in Counterinsurgency," 80.

research. If a viable indigenous governance capacity does not exist then the strong actor should seriously consider not getting involved. If it does, a slippery slope exists that will require increasing strong actor resources and violates the principle that it is the host nation's war to win or lose.³⁴⁶

Finally, in the social science realm, any theory that can explain a complex phenomenon such as asymmetric conflict outcome over 75 percent of the time is tremendous. Yet, the nature of warfare is unique in that the gap between theory and reality is filled by the lives of brave young men and women sent to fight its nation's wars. In short, 75 percent is not good enough. Building upon Arreguín-Toft's STRATINT theory this thesis contends that a strong actor must use constraint, the appropriate force, and have a viable indigenous government to work through to increase its probability of defeating David.

³⁴⁶ Rothstein, "Less is More: The Problematic Future of Irregular Warfare," 279.

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